Clashes in Maguindanao imperil peace talks; 13 dead

Story on PAGE A2

Hot babe mad at Viva mag showing her nude

BAKIT KA KASI NAG BOLD KUNG AYAW MONG PAKUHA NG BOLD?

By Michael Ubac and Philip Tubeza

THE HOT BABE is crying foul.

Sexy starlet Maui Taylor yesterday sought out Sen. Loren Legarda to protest her alleged exploitation by

HOT BABE/ A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **2003 budget deficit on target** BUSINESS/B1
- **Erap hurt in fall as knees buckle** NEWS/A5
- **Israel slay try on Saddam bared** WORLD/A8

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FPJ to Muslims: No backing out

NOW you see him, now you don't. But on Tuesday, Fernando Poe Jr. puts in a rare personal appearance during festivities for the first anniversary of the party-list Assalam-Bangsamoro party at Club Filipino, San Juan. His hosts honor him with the Muslim traditional attire and pledges of support. JOAN BONDOC

Actor to file candidacy on Dec. 29, says Sotto

By Dona Pazzibugan and Christine O. Avendaño

AFTER making his first political speech since he declared his candidacy, actor Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday categorically said he was not backing out of the presidential race.

At the Senate, opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara quickly supported Poe's message, saying Poe's candidacy was "a go. And so he's looking forward to the campaign."

Poe's unofficial spokesperson, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, said the actor would file his certificate of candidacy on Dec. 29, a date firmed up in a meeting that he, Angara and Poe had Monday night. Angara said he could tell reporters only that what they talked about were "organizational details of the campaign."

Poe's impromptu remarks in Club Filipino, before the first congress of the Muslim party-list group Assalam-Bangsamoro People's party, lacked specifics but received a rousing welcome.

Before he took the floor, the party-list group presented him with a 10-point agenda for his first 100 days in office.

FPJ/ A11

Saddam daughter demands int'l trial for detained leader

BAGHDAD—Saddam Hussein's family wants the former leader to be tried by an international court instead of a special tribunal set up by the US-installed Iraqi Governing Council, one of his daughters said Tuesday.

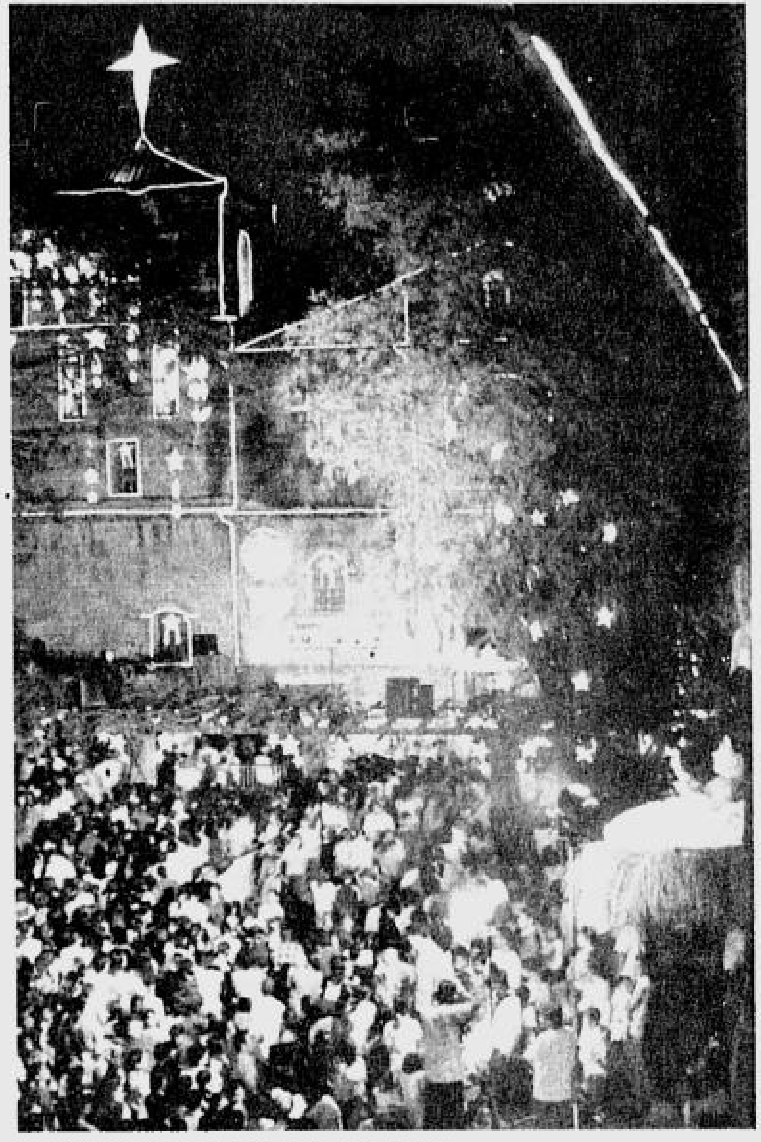
Raghad Saddam Hussein urged an international trial for her father after US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair called for a public trial that would be conducted in a manner to be determined by the Iraqi people, with no mention of outside participation.

At The Hague, war crimes legal experts voiced fears that a planned trial of Saddam before a special Iraqi-led tribunal—in which he could face a swift trial and the death penalty—would be a travesty of justice without a role for the international judicial community.

Raghad said her father appeared sedated in footage released Sunday by the US-led occupation authority after his capture near his hometown of Tikrit.

"Every honest person who knows Saddam know that he is firm and powerful. Saddam was tranquilized when captured," she said in an interview with the Dubai-based Al-Ara-

SADDAM/ A10



THE DAWNING OF CHRISTMAS
This scene at the Las Piñas Church at dawn of Dec. 16, the start of the nine-day Masses leading to the birthday of Jesus Christ, is redolent with the passion of Filipinos across time and seasons for Christendom's best-loved feast. AFP

Biggest OFW group inclined to back Roco

By Norman Bordadora

THE PRESIDENTIAL campaign of Alyansa ng Pag-asa (Alliance of Hope) standard-bearer Raul Roco yesterday got a boost from the biggest organization of overseas Filipino workers at its national convention in Quezon City.

Migrante International has 86 chapters in 22 countries and local chapters nationwide and plans to vie for party-list representation in the May elections.

Roco said Migrante would help in his campaign.

"The leaders of Migrante have told me about their willingness to help in our presidential campaign," Roco said in the presence of Migrante leaders after he addressed the migrant workers' convention on the campus of the University of Philippines.

Roco publicly called for votes in favor of Migrante in the party-list race during the convention, which was also attended by Alyansa ng Pag-asa senatorial candidate Melanio Mauricio, House Minority Leader Carlos

BIGGEST/ A10

Powell: Ople was a pivotal figure in RP history

By Jerome Aning

HOURS after successful cancer surgery, US Secretary of State Collin Powell eulogized Foreign Secretary Blas Ople as "one of the pivotal figures of the late 20th century for Philippine history."

"He was a renaissance man who won distinction as an academician, author, legislator and statesman, and was a warm friend of the United States," Powell said in a statement dated Dec. 15.

The warm praise reflected the current state of Philippine-American relations, which grew much closer under Ople and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Powell said Ople, who passed away on Sunday, "will be sorely missed in international circles, but he leaves behind a US-Philippines relationship that has grown stronger month by month since he took over the DFA."

The US official also recalled Ople's staunch support for the United States, from Ople's days as a guerrilla fighter during World War II to his role in the global war on terrorism.

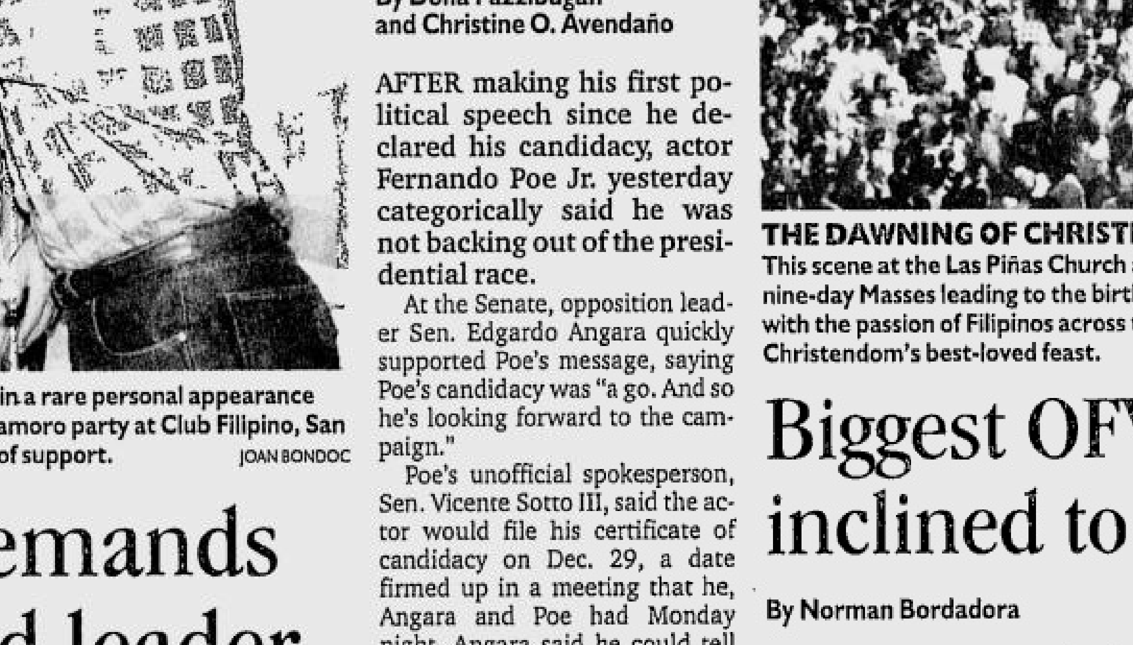
In particular, Powell lauded Ople for "prophesying" last Nov. 22 that Baghdad "will be transformed from a symbol of brutal despotism to a new, shining symbol of human freedom."

"The sacrifices invested in the liberation of Iraq, to which Filipinos made a significant contribution, will be fully vindicated and cherished for all time," Ople had said.

Powell, 66, yesterday underwent a two-hour operation for "localized prostate cancer" at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

"The United States stands with the Filipino people and with Mr. Ople's family and colleagues in

POWELL/ A10



DIRECT from Bahrain, President Macapagal pays her respects to Foreign Secretary Blas Ople and condoles with his widow Susana at Christ the King Church in Green Meadows, Quezon City. Ople was en route to join the President's trip when he was felled by a heart attack. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Lawmaker blames Neri for deficit

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri has himself to blame for the government's budget deficit, a senior member of the House of Representatives yesterday said.

Rep. Exequiel Javier (Lakas, Antique) said Neri, former head of the Congressional Planning and Budget Office, was among those who pushed for the specific tax system on "sin products," which has failed to generate enough revenues for the government.

"It was Neri who convinced lawmakers in 1996 to adopt a specific tax system [in lieu] of the value-added ad valorem tax system for cigarettes and alcohol," Javier said in a statement.

Now that Neri is in the Cabinet, it is "easy for him to say that the current sin tax system has failed and that indexation is the answer," said Javier, former chair of the House ways and means committee.

Javier was reacting to Neri's claim that Congress was unable to pass a measure reforming the tax system because it was held hostage by tobacco and liquor interests.

Neri said the same "vicious cycle" of "booty capitalism," which he describes as the oligarchy supporting politicians to capture "economic power" would control

LAWMAKER/ A11

Church, state worst enemies of family planning

By Quijano de Manila

COMMENTARY

(The Philippines' leading writer, Nick Joaquin [aka Quijano de Manila], gives some provocative views on the consequences of "unlimited freedom of genesis.")

UNLIMITED freedom of genesis. One unregenerate pen titled his say on the consequences of such freedom "The Pinoy Murder Mystery" because, explained he, the usual stabs at the Pinoy as dull, slow, listless, languid, supine, passive, unoriginal, unenterprising and (the unkindest cut) indolent, result from a fact of Philippine life.

Poverty and large families ensure that the average Pinoy infant gets no full nourishment when needing it most. And a child malnourished during its first three years will for the rest of its life be dull, slow, listless, languid, supine, passive, unoriginal, unenterprising, "indolent."

Cradle hunger has forever starved intelligence.

To put it bluntly: the Pinoy is being murdered at home, during babyhood, by too pro-life parents, as well as by other holinesses.

On the other hand, say the other hands, those who have succeeded with and prospered on family planning are now finding that family planning is a double-edged sword.

Germany is warning the Germans that, unless they stop family planning, Germany will soon be Turkish. The French are realizing that family planning is making France more and more Moorish. In like manner imperiled, Singapore is begging its married couples to

CHURCH/ A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with rains becoming widespread over the eastern sections. The rest of Luzon will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/17/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

Clashes imperil peace talks

4 soldiers, 9 MILF rebs slain in anti-Pentagon operation

By TJ Burgonio

A FRESH outbreak of fighting between government troops and Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas in Maguindanao late Monday that left four soldiers and nine rebels dead could delay the resumption of peace talks, military officials and rebel leaders said yesterday.

The military said that the fighting broke out when two Army platoons, deployed as a "blocking force" against the Pentagon kidnap gang, were attacked by some 300 MILF rebels in Barangay Gawan, Datu Saudi town at about 8 p.m. on Monday.

"It threatens to imperil the efforts that we are doing for peace. The coordinating committee [on the cessation of hostilities] is doing everything positive to arrest the escalation of fighting to put a stop to it," said Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, Armed Forces vice chief.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu, who blamed the military for the clashes, said that if the fighting continues, it could threaten the peace talks.

Stalled talks

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, the military's chief information officer, voiced hopes however that the stalled talks would resume as scheduled in the first week of January in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

"We're still hopeful that the peace process will be preserved, we hope that this will not greatly affect any development," he told reporters.

Hostilities appeared to be escalating yesterday as fresh fighting broke out anew in Datu Piang town, killing at least four more soldiers.

Hundreds of residents from the towns of Talitay, Talayan, Datu Piang and Datu Saudi Ampatuan towns have also packed their belongings and fled.

The military has filed a complaint with the joint coordinating committee on the cessation of hostilities (CCCH), claiming the attack on Monday was a breach of the cease-fire concluded in July this year.

Anti-kidnap drive

Armed Forces chief Gen. Narciso Abaya said the military operation in Barangay Gawang had been aimed at flushing out the kidnappers of 24-year-old trader Ronald Sia who was abducted by the Pentagon gang on Dec. 8.

"We were pursuing the kidnappers, not the MILF," said Abaya but did not say how the fighting could affect the talks.

On Saturday, the troops pursuing Pentagon gang members were shot at by armed men, triggering a firefight that left a soldier dead and another wounded.

This triggered a firefight in which one enlisted personnel was killed while another was wounded. A member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit was reported missing after the clash.

Talayan is adjacent to Datu Saudi where Monday night's clash occurred.

Finger-pointing

In a letter of protest to Benjie Midtimbang, the CCCH chair, the military said the attack was a violation of the cease-fire and a joint communique in which the rebels vowed to help the government flush out kidnap and terror groups.

"We hope that the other side will find a way to resolve this conflict. We call on the MILF leadership to strictly adhere to the agreed cease-fire," said Lucero.

Kabalu, however, blamed the military for the clashes saying it failed to coordinate the manhunt with the MILF.

He said violence could have been avoided had the military talked with the MILF peace panel before it launched the manhunt.

Kabalu admitted that the death toll on both sides was growing but he did not say how many were killed on the MILF side.

Kabalu said MILF rebels captured the two soldiers missing from the Monday clash in Barangay Gawang. He said the captured soldiers would be turned over "probably to the Red Cross." He said the two captives were safe.

Kabalu said that the MILF had killed five soldiers in yesterday's clash in Datu Piang town.

Mosque garrison

He told the AFP the troops who allegedly used the mosque in the town as a garrison "ignored order to surrender peacefully and instead opened fire on MILF fighters, triggering a gunbattle that left at least five soldiers dead."

Kabalu's claim of government casualties could not be independently confirmed.

Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the bodies of the four soldiers killed last Monday have not been recovered and that two soldiers were also missing as of yesterday.

He said since the start of the clashes on Saturday, the military has already suffered six fatalities.

The MILF, he said, had suffered 13 fatalities.

Government and rebel negotiators have been finding ways to put a stop to the fighting to save the volatile peace process.

The joint CCCH in an emergency meeting at the Estosan Hotel in Cotabato City on Monday discussed charges of violations filed by the two sides against each other.

Midtimbang has agreed to a repositioning of MILF guerrillas in the current war zones so that violence would be contained, according to Ando. *With a report from Rosa-May V. de Guzman and Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau and AFP*

A TIME TO REFLECT - Part 6

UPDATE

- *The nationwide response to our call for presidential candidates to be rated based on integrity, competence and charisma was overwhelming. We received more than 400 text messages, telephone calls, faxes and e-mail.*
- *The best news of all is the confirmation that, yes, Filipinos are thinking, intelligent voters.*
- *A lot of people do appreciate the ad and want more of the ad in Tagalog and in the major dialects.*
- *In appreciation for everyone's effort, we will answer each message during the holiday break.*

Due to numerous requests, we are running an updated version of the ad.

Criteria Required for Presidential Candidates

ISSUE: Our political system has NOT been responsive to the needs of our people. This has resulted in the accumulation of extremely difficult problems over the last 50 years. Our people are desperate and losing faith in the democratic institutions.

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INTEGRITY: This is more than simple honesty. It is holding on to one's principles in doing what is moral and right regardless of insurmountable odds. It is saying NO to graft and corruption. NO to bribes. NO to influence peddlers.

COMPETENCE: The President must have the adequate education and experience to address the most complex problems of the country that have accumulated over the last 50 years - peace and order, population explosion, rising unemployment, and deteriorating educational system.

CHARACTER & CHARISMA: We understand the feeling of desperation and helplessness of our "masa" which is why they tend to choose someone who they feel they know and who they believe understands their problems. However, popularity is not enough.

Charisma in a President means he/she can inspire and unite our people and be able to convince us to make sacrifices for the common good.

Character is the integrity of the President to make the right decisions such as, going after big income tax evaders, smugglers, etc. A President with character will give justice to those who have less in life.

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To better serve the public, this ad will appear in Tagalog and in major dialects.

Military denies Time's JI report

By TJ Burgonio

THE MILITARY yesterday denied a report by a US-based news magazine that some 600 operatives of the Jemaah Islamiyah were still holed up in southern Philippines, saying this was an overestimate.

In its Dec. 8 issue, the Time Magazine reported that the JI maintains a wide reach in Mindanao, which is emerging as an alternative training ground to Afghanistan, noting that some 600 JI militants remained active in at least three camps.

"We would like to note that this is an overestimate of their presence. Although this figure is still to be verified, we stick to our previous estimate that we are looking for the 31 JI members who are still roaming around Central Mindanao," said Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military chief information officer.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita had earlier alleged that 31 JI operatives continued to train secessionist rebels in bomb-making in the latter's camps in the Lanao provinces, using a $15,000 fund.

Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, Armed Forces vice chief, however, said two weeks ago that most of the 31 agents, mostly Indonesians, had fled the country.

When asked about the conflicting figures on the number of militants in Mindanao, Lucero said: "You really cannot have an exact figure. That's actually an estimate of how many JI members are still in Mindanao."

The JI, which is suspected of plotting to establish a pan-Islamic state across Southeast Asia, including Mindanao, is believed to have links to the al-Qaida terror network of Osama bin Laden.

Meanwhile, a non-government organization, Mindanao People's Caucus, has reported to the military that it has not found any evidence that would prove that JI trained in the camps of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Mt. Cararao in Lanao del Norte.

"Mary Ann Arnado, secretary general of the Mindanao People's Caucus, has provided us a report last Dec. 15, saying that they had no evidence of any training going on there," Garcia, chair of the government's coordinating committee on the cessation of hostilities (CCCH), said in a phone interview.

Staffmembers of the NGO conducted an inspection of the MILF camp from Dec. 9 to 10 to verify Ermita's charges, according to Garcia.

Benjie Midtimbang, chair of the MILF's CCCH, for his part, also reported to Garcia that the MILF failed to validate claims by the military that two of its sub-commanders had escorted JI elements to their training camps in Mindanao, Garcia said.

"We'll have to give a little weight to what they say," he said.

Solons propose extended truce

HOUSE legislators yesterday said they would work for an extended Christmas cease-fire to last until after the May 2004 polls to ensure the holding of orderly and peaceful elections and give meaning to President Macapagal-Arroyo's call for national reconciliation.

The group, led by Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, chair of the House committee on national defense, includes Assistant Majority Leader Allan PeterCayetano, Iloilo Rep. Augusto Syjuco, Davao Rep. Prospero Nograles and Bulacan Rep. Wilhelmino Sy-Alvarado.

Pichay proposed that the cease-fire with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front be extended because of the ongoing peace negotiations.

He said the cease-fire should be extended to all groups operating outside the system as well as those in the political arena.

Pichay stressed the need to protect voters who should be able to choose their leaders in a peaceful atmosphere without being distracted by smear campaigns and dirty politics.

"It would be great if this initiative for a longer cease-fire would lead to lasting peace with enemies of the State who also have the genuine welfare of our people in mind," he said.

Cayetano urged rebels and other groups to give the electoral system a chance.

"We urge them to channel their energies and resources to make the polls clean and honest," he said.

Syjuco said the country was facing a most important election that will determine the fate of the nation and people.

"Now is the time for all good Filipinos to come to the aid of our country," he said.

Syjuco said voters, regardless of ideology, should be allowed to freely cast their votes and should not be made to suffer from the crossfire between rebel and government forces who, he said, were fighting for the same cause of social justice, prosperity and freedom.

Nograles said an extended cease-fire would be in line with the President's program to reach out and reconcile with all sectors.

"It shows her sincerity in solving the nation's ills by enjoining everyone to stop divisiveness now," he said. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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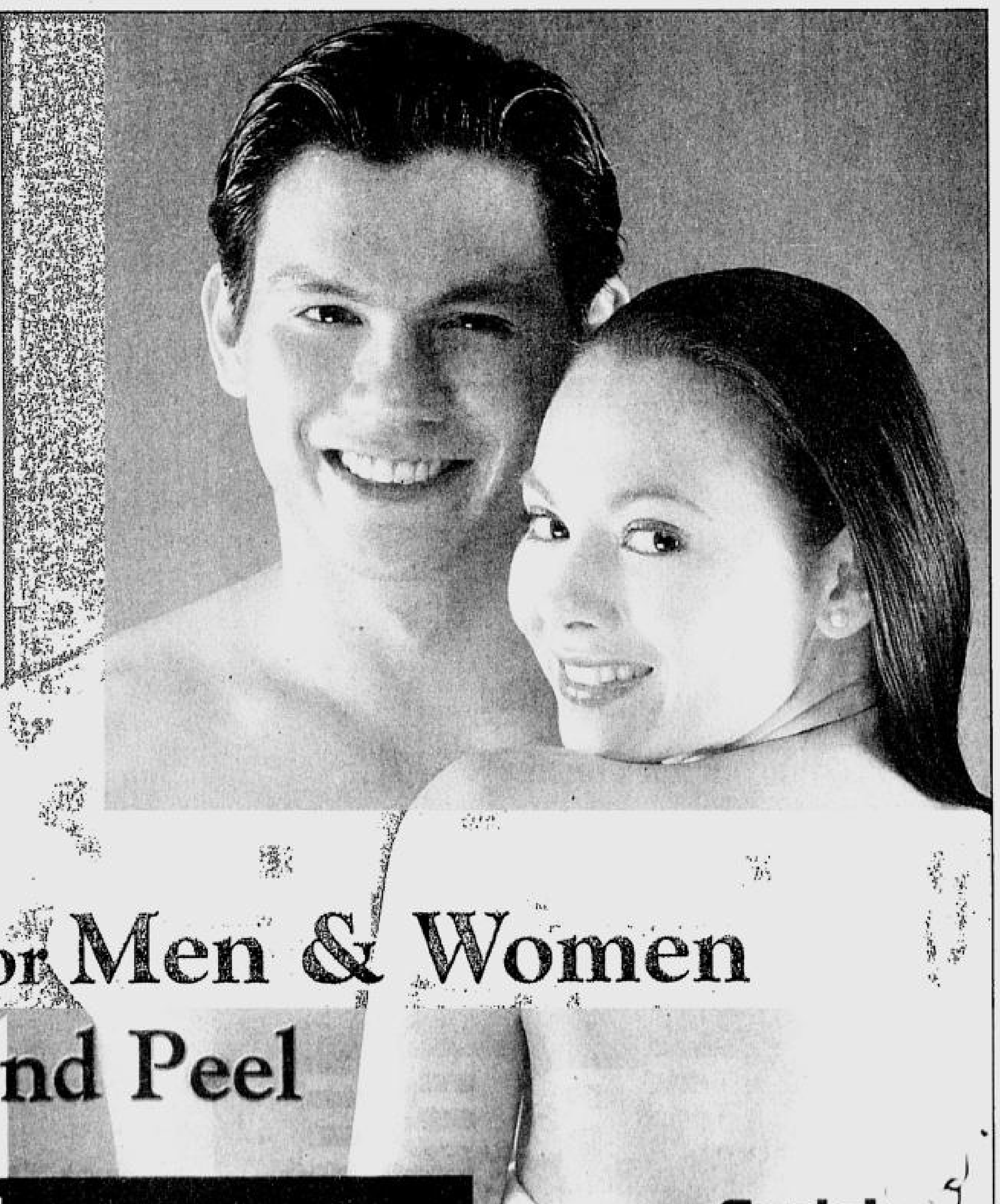

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SHABU INGREDIENTS

Customs presses smuggling rap vs Erap adviser

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Merry Christmas from THE LANDMARK

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE BUREAU of Customs has asked the Court of Appeals to dismiss Zamboanga trader Lee Peng Wee's legal challenge to the criminal charges filed against him by the justice department.

In a 12-page comment, customs collector Ma. Lourdes V. Mangaoang said Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong did not err when he upheld the charges against Lee for allegedly importing chemicals that could be used for the possible manufacture of the illegal drug, methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

"Probable cause need not be based on clear and convincing evidence of guilt, neither on evidence establishing guilt beyond reasonable doubt and definitely not on evidence establishing absolute certainty of guilt," said Mangaoang.

In a resolution last October, Datumanong denied Lee's motion asking the Department of Justice to dismiss the case against him for allegedly violating Republic Act 6969, or the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Wastes Control Act of 1990.

Former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez had cleared Lee in September 2002 but Datumanong reversed Perez's decision. It was Datumanong's April resolution that Lee appealed.

Besides Lee, the other respondents in the case were Malaysian nationals Ang Beng Ean, Tan Nge Foo, Sim Kwan Kean, Winfred Caoile, Nancy Lim and Gajar Munong. Tan has turned state witness.

Lee was accused of being the owner of 39 drums of chemicals, said to be ingredients for manufacture of methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu, that were smuggled into the country from Malaysia in June 2000 on board MV Lady Mary Joy 2.

Lee, who was designated adviser on Mindanao affairs by jailed former President Estrada, was listed in the shipment's papers as the consignee.

Lee is believed to wield tremendous influence in western Mindanao and was recently in the news again with the publication of former Estrada adviser Robert Aventajado's published account of the Sipadan hostage crisis, which touched on Lee's controversial role in the release of Abu Sayyaf hostages.

Mangaoang said Lee "cannot feign ignorance" about the contents of Tan's affidavit which categorically said that Lee owned the 39 drums of chemicals.

She added that Tan even executed another affidavit "detailing the conspiracy" of the respondents to illegally import the chemicals.

The importation of the chemicals needed the approval of the Dangerous Drugs Board, the Environment Management Board and the PNP Firearms and Explosives Unit but Lee allegedly was not able to produce any permit from those agencies.

Department of Science and Technology experts examined the chemicals and found that they were highly toxic.

Also, Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory chief Col. Eriel Mallorca ruled that one of the chemicals from the seized drums, methylene chloride, maybe used as solvent for shabu production.

Brenda Nazareth of the DOST confirmed that another chemical found in the seized drums, forane, may be used to produce freon which is used to crystallize methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu.

Another chemical found was toulene disocynate, which is listed as a "precursor or essential chemical in the production of narcotics drugs" under the 1996 United Nations Convention Against Elicit Trafficking of Narcotics Drugs.

S. Korean tourist drowns off Cebu

A SOUTH Korean tourist drowned and six others were rescued yesterday after their motorboat capsized off Cebu island, officials said.

Commander Elson Hermogino, head of the Philippine Coast Guard station in Cebu City, said the tourists were en route to have lunch at a floating restaurant off Olango Island when their boat was swamped by big waves and strong winds some 100 meters from shore.

Kim Jim Sang, 32, drowned and another tourist suffered minor injuries. The rest were unscathed, Hermogino said.

Island residents were able to pluck the tourists from the water. They were later airlifted by helicopter to a nearby air force base. *AP*

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NEW COURT PLEA

Erap hurt in fall as knees buckle

By Armand N. Nocum

IT COULD be his weight. But more likely it was his arthritic knees that caused the fall he is now giving as an urgent reason to seek treatment abroad.

"I was just walking when my knees caved in, and I fell to the ground. I still have bruises on my forehead," detained former president Joseph Estrada told the INQUIRER last Saturday during a telephone interview from Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

Yesterday, Estrada cited the incident to formally ask the first division of the Sandiganbayan for permission to go the United States to have his knees operated on by American surgeon Dr. Christopher Mow.

"I am compelled to appeal to Your Honor's sense of compassion on account of the pain that I am enduring and experiencing," the ex-president said in his one-page letter. "A few days ago, I tripped when my knees gave in and my forehead hit the pavement. I sustained injuries as a result, and the same are still evident."

It was the first time that Estrada wrote to the court, whose authority he had consistently questioned, maintaining that he is still president.

He noted that Dr. Antonio Calanoc, orthopedic and spine surgeon at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center, had previously testified before the Sandigan about the "severe deterioration of my knee condition." He said his affliction "has now progressed to the spinal column."

Estrada, who is facing plunder and graft charges before the first division, is also suffering from "multiple slipped discs," which doctors say could paralyze him from the waist down.

The former leader said that he wants to be treated by Mow, who knows his "true" condition.

"He has ... monitored my knee condition for the last four years, thus, my complete trust and confidence in him," said Estrada, again raising his right as patient to seek treatment by a doctor, and in a hospital, of his choice.

Government prosecutors earlier offered to help facilitate Mow's entry into the country so he could operate on Estrada here.

The ex-president's letter came a day after his court-appointed lawyers filed a motion asking the Sandigan to allow him to spend Christmas and New Year's Day with his ailing mother in her San Juan home.

In the motion seeking a nine-day furlough for Estrada, lawyers Jose B. Flaminiano and Noel Malaya said their client's 98-year-old mother was in a very delicate condition.

NBI asked to probe Villaruel death

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE FAMILY of slain former Air Transportation Office chief Panfilo Villaruel yesterday formally asked the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the reserve captain's death, which the family believes is a case of murder.

In fact, the Villaruels' lawyer Josue San Pedro yesterday said that among the angles the family wanted the bureau investigated is the absence of any negotiation for Villaruel's surrender when he took over the air control tower at the airport last month.

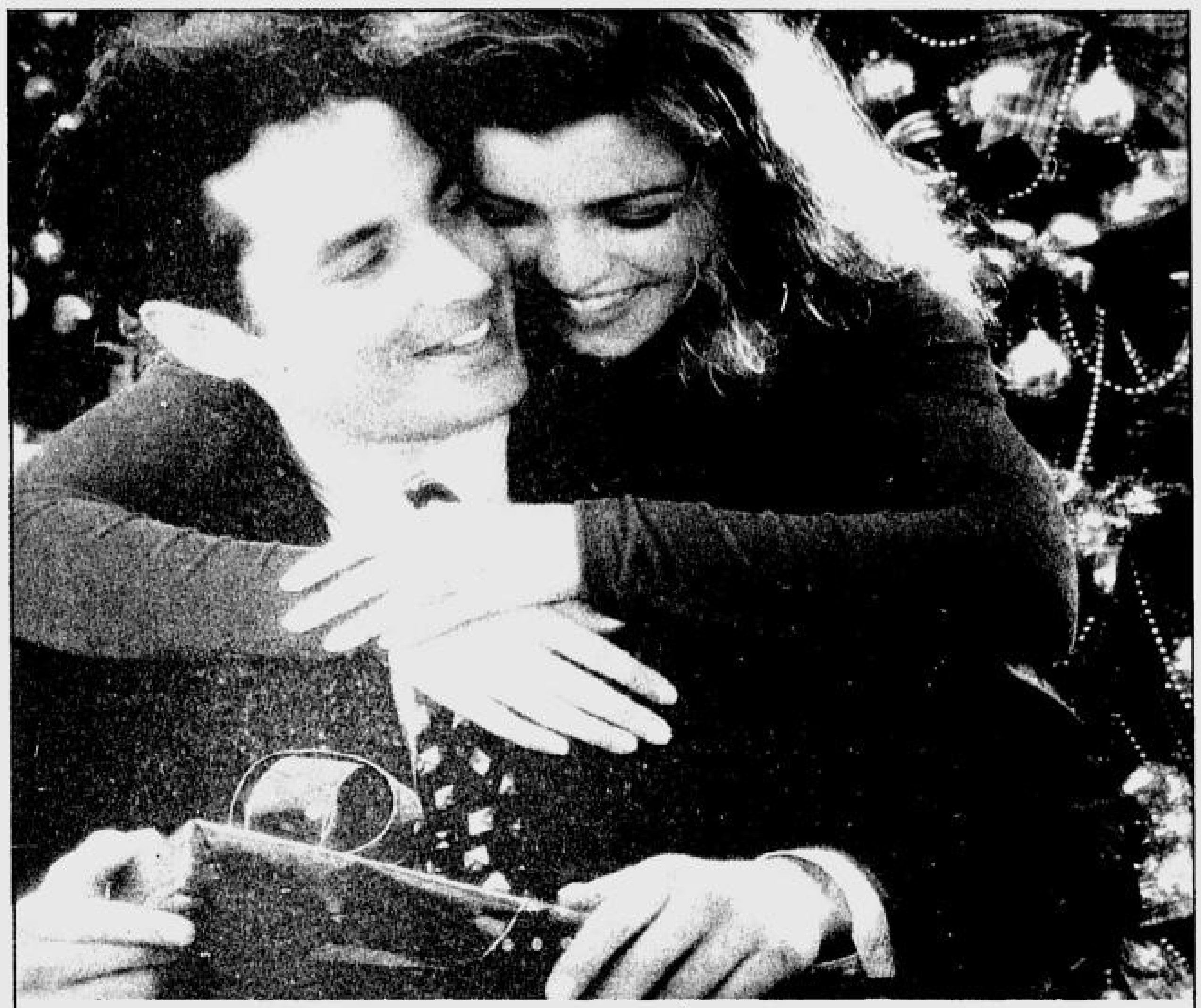
"The captain was just a victim of impulsive feelings," San Pedro said yesterday.

San Pedro accompanied Villaruel's wife Marites, his daughter Mary Ann and his son Britch to meet with officials of the National Capital Region Division of the NBI.

Villaruel's family has maintained that the former ATO chief was willing and ready to surrender when members of the Special Weapons and Tactics team barged into the control tower and killed Villaruel and his companion Lt. S.G. Ricardo Catchillar in a hail of gunfire while the captain was crying surrender in a live radio interview.

Marites had earlier denounced the manner her husband was killed.

San Pedro also said yesterday that the family would request the NBI to speak with persons who have seen or talked with Villaruel while he was going to the tower or while he was inside the tower, as these people could give valuable information about Villaruel's state of mind on that fateful day.



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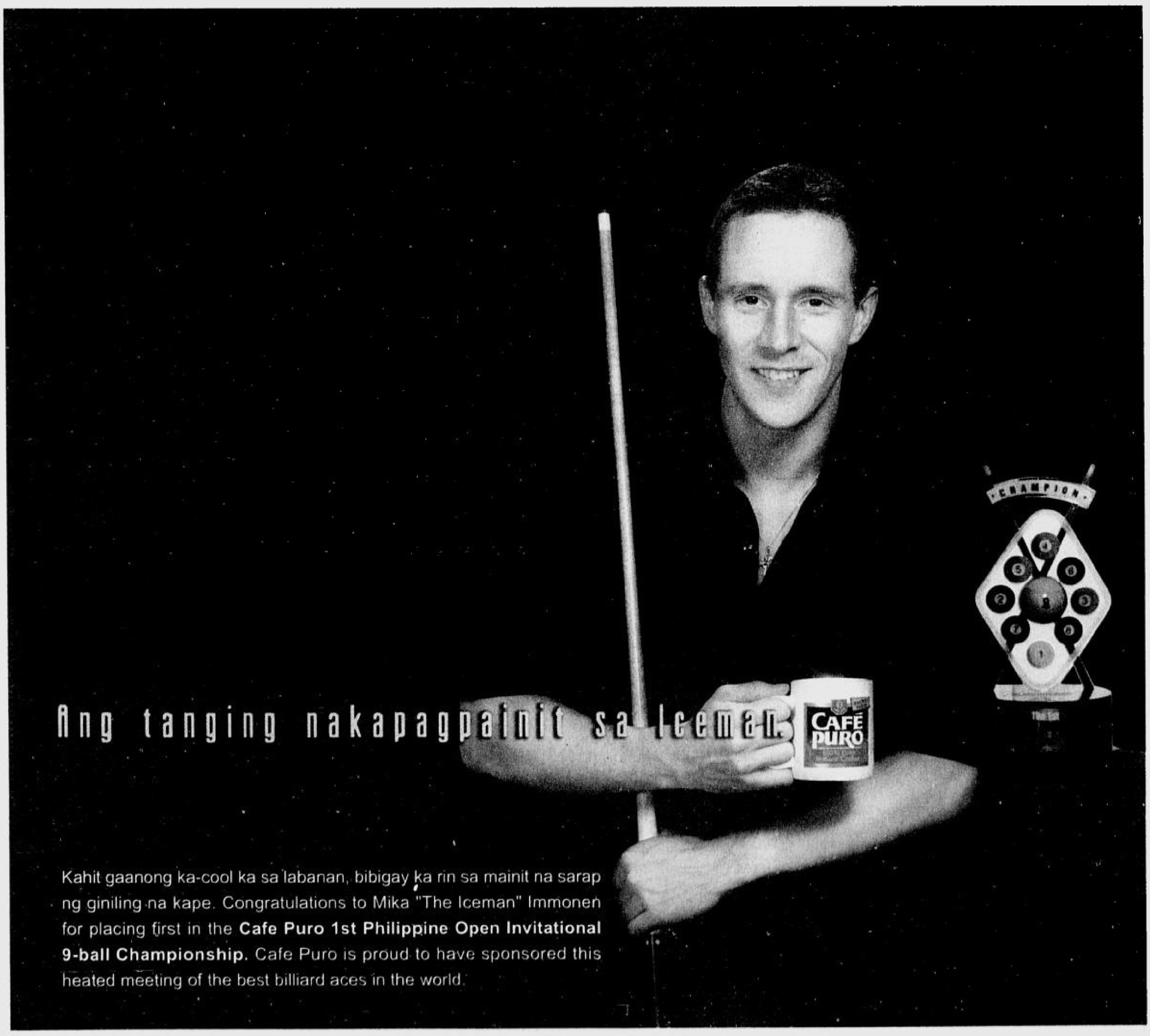
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ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO ROSALES: There is hope for Filipinos ERIK ARAZAS

New archbishop offers message of hope, peace

By Leila Salaverria

THE NEW Archbishop of Manila, Gaudencio Rosales, offered a message of hope and peace to churchgoers at the Manila Cathedral yesterday in the first of the *misa de gallo* (dawn masses) of the year.

The first *misa de gallo* that Rosales officiated as Archbishop lasted one hour. It began at 4:35 a.m., but as early as 4:15, all the seats inside the cathedral were taken and some of the churchgoers had to stand throughout the service.

Many of the worshippers were wearing their school and office uniforms, intending to head straight for work or school after the service. Several policemen could also be seen patrolling the area.

Hungry churchgoers headed straight for the food stalls selling traditional *misa de gallo* fare such as *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* after the service. Even fishball vendors were up early, and had already positioned themselves by the cathedral's front steps by the time the Mass ended.

In his 15-minute homily delivered in a mixture of Filipino and English, Rosales said that despite the many hardships that Filipinos are facing today—which could still get worse—there was still hope, especially with the coming of Christ.

"*Sa wakas dadating ang hinihintay: ang pag asa na dumating si Kristo* (What we are waiting for will come in the end: the hope that Christ will be born)," he said.

But even though some might initially fail to find the Lord, it does not mean that all is lost, he said.

"*Sa katapusan matutuklasan din siya pag ang tao nakatagpo ng kapayapaan* (The Lord will be found when people find peace)," he said.

Rosales said that three things would happen during the nine days of the *misa de gallo*: the preparation for Christ's coming, the belief in Him and the discovery that finally, we will meet the Lord.

The newly installed Archbishop's sermon, though containing references to battles, pain and tragedy, was devoid of any references to politics or political personalities.

16 RP firms eye contracts for reconstruction of Iraq

By Michelle V. Remo

SIXTEEN Filipino companies that have expressed interest in obtaining contracts for the reconstruction of Iraq have been accredited by the Philippine Overseas Construction Board to engage in construction activities abroad.

POCB, which is under the trade and industry department, is the agency that accredits domestic construction firms to operate abroad.

It said the 16 companies were accredited based on financial capability and expertise of technical staff, among other criteria.

Reuters reported from Washington yesterday that the Pentagon has limited $18.6 billion in US-funded contracts to .rebuild Iraq to companies from 62 countries, including the Philippines, that it said supported the US war effort.

Dennis Santiago of the POCB's registration and incentive division said in a telephone interview that the 16 companies would still need to be assessed by the US credit rating agency Dun & Brad Street Co.

Based on the assessment, the US government would decide whether to include them in the list of construction companies allowed to undertake construction work in Iraq, he said.

The companies include: Aboitiz Construction Group; A.M. Oreta & Co.; Atlantic, Gulf & Pacific Co. of Manila; D.M. Consunji; EEI Corp.; Hydro Resources Contractors Corp.; Makati Development Corp.; M.Y. Reyes Builders and Development Corp.;

Meralco Industrial Engineering Services Corp.; Philippine Iron Construction & Marine Works; RII Builders; Romago; S.P. Castro and Associates.; Shinryo Phil.; Summa Kumagai and Technoserve Construction Co.

Santiago said the Filipino construction firms are almost sure to be granted a slot since the Philippines is a member of the so-called "coalition of the willing" that joined or supported the US and British-led war on Iraq.

The US government will only entertain the application of a firm interested in participating in the Iraqi reconstruction if it comes from a country belonging to the coalition.

Apart from the Philippines, the list of eligible countries includes: Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Columbia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Honduras, Iceland, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Spain, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, the United States and Uzbekistan.

Although the 16 firms have already expressed interest in doing work in Iraq, Santiago said they are still waiting for the situation in Iraq to stabilize before formally applying for slots to avoid major business risks. *With Reuters*

Naked run for clean, peaceful polls

WHAT could be a bolder, louder call for a clean and peaceful elections than a group of young men running around naked.

Yesterday, members of the Alpha Phi Omega (APO) of the University of the Philippines drummed up a campaign for a clean and peaceful elections, among the many issues they raised as its theme for the annual Oblation Run.

With only their faces covered, several APO frat members squeezed through thousands of screaming female and male students inside the Palma Hall in UP Diliman. Another group staged a similar run in Manila's university belt.

During yesterday's event, the fraternity members sent not only the women, but also men, screaming and elbowing their way to a better view, as soon as the runners came in front of the Palma Hall steps.

"We need reforms in the government leadership, among the many issues that should be addressed. We are calling on the people, especially the youth, to make a wise decision in the coming May 2004 elections," said an APO member who refused to be named.

The Oblation Run started as a publicity stunt for the satirical play "Ang Hubad na Bayani" which the APO Fraternity staged in the late 1970s to deride the Marcos administration. *Tina Santos with PDI research*

Overseas Pinoys' int'l confab opens

By Jerome Aning

SOME 4,000 Filipinos residing abroad converged yesterday at the Philippine International Convention Center for the 2nd Global Filipino Networking Convention, which aims to unite immigrants, overseas workers and foreign nationals of Filipino descent worldwide to help in the development of the Philippines.

The three-day conference which started yesterday has the theme "Filipino Power for Development."

Former President Fidel Ramos delivered the keynote address to the delegates, mostly Filipino-American business leaders, legislators, community organizers and media groups which shared their respective success stories.

Presidential adviser on overseas Filipino communities Heherson Alvarez said the participants' exposure to new technologies, cultures and ways of life could be tapped to contribute enduring economic, social and political structures.

The convention was chaired by Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon. Other participants include Mina Gabor, former tourism secretary and current president of the Philippine Small and Medium Business Development Foundation; and labor undersecretary Danilo Cruz, who represented Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, another co-chair.

Among the prominent Fil-Ams who attended the convention were National Federation of Filipino-American Association national chair Loida Nicolas-Lewis, Hawaii Sen. Ron Menor, Washington Rep. Velma Veloria, Dr. Estella Evangelista of the Association of Philippine Physicians in America, and international race car champion Angelo Barretto.

Forums were held on the economy, youth, social development, tourism, media and health.

The convention was in accordance with Executive Order No. 208 which created a public-private sector task force for the convention.

Palace losing sleep over JIL leader's bid

By Juliet L. Javellana

MALACAÑANG is not perturbed by more than one dozen unknown aspirants who have formalized their quest for the presidency, but it is losing sleep over one: Eddie Villanueva, leader of the Jesus Is Lord movement.

Villanueva has announced his intent in no uncertain terms, but has not filed his certificate of candidacy. Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, campaign spokesperson for President Macapagal Arroyo, is rushing to stop this from happening.

Defensor said Ms Macapagal's camp would like to ask Villanueva to drop his bid, but not before finding out why the JIL head had decided to run for president himself.

This was not about the movement's purported seven million members that could translate to votes, Defensor said. "It's (about) losing one of the President's staunchest allies in the religious sector."

Ms Macapagal was supposed to meet with Villanueva yesterday but nobody at the Palace would confirm it.

"We are not aware of any meeting," Defensor said, "(although) I'm very sure there are quarters who would like to see these ... problems and concerns, threshed out." But he added that the President would not directly ask Villanueva to back out.

Villanueva had "reservations" about the administration, Defensor admitted, but he did not elaborate apart from saying he had spoken with the JIL leader a month ago.

"He told me he would like to think things over and that he respected the President and he wouldn't do anything to harm the administration. I am confident that at some point this will be clarified," Defensor said.

Bet promises US visas for all

By Alcuin Papa and Martin P. Marfil

IF YOU want to be an instant American citizen, vote for Rev. Lawyer Elly Velez Balocos Lao Pamatong for president.

Pamatong, of the United States Supporters' Alliance (USSA), is set to file his certificate of candidacy at the Commission on Elections at 10 a.m. today.

In an advisory sent to media yesterday, Pamatong said he would establish the "true Government of Democracy (GOD)" to work against the God of Money in the Philippines. He said his government would be based on a policy of "total honesty in public service," designed to destroy "all forms of corruption."

He promised US visas for all Filipinos "within the first 100 days" of his administration, based on a purported decision handed down by US Court of Appeals Ninth Circuit Judge Harry Pregerson in 1994, which allegedly read: "Filipinos born during the territorial period were, and still are, citizens of the United States of America."

JC for FPJ

For good measure, consider "Jesus Christ" for vice president.

A man who said that this was his nickname yesterday became the first vice presidential candidate for the 2004 polls.

His real name is Alfredo Ananayo, and he is a security guard residing in Barangay Holy Spirit, Quezon City. He has one advantage over his illustrious namesake: youth. Unlike the biblical JC hero who was born in Bethlehem more than 2000 years ago, AA was born in Baguio City only 57 years ago.

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Amoxicillin cap. 500 mg	✓	3.70	15.75	12.05/cap
Amoxicillin drops 125 mg/1.25 ml/10 ml	✓	37.00	80.75	43.75/bot
Amoxicillin susp. 250 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓	49.00	144.00	95.00/bot
Chloramphenicol cap. 500 mg	✓	3.40	37.75	34.35/cap
Chloramphenicol susp. 125 mg/5 ml 60 ml	✓	41.40	394.75	353.35/bot
Co-trimoxazole tab (TM-160mg SMZ-800mg)	✓	2.30	26.00	23.70/tab
Co-trimoxazole cap. (TM-80mg SMZ-400mg)	✓	2.60	14.80	12.20/cap
Co-trimoxazole susp. (TM-40mg SMZ-200mg)	✓	25.00	115.75	90.75/bot
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Carbocisteine susp. 100 mg/5 ml, 60 ml	✓	32.70	87.25	54.55/bot
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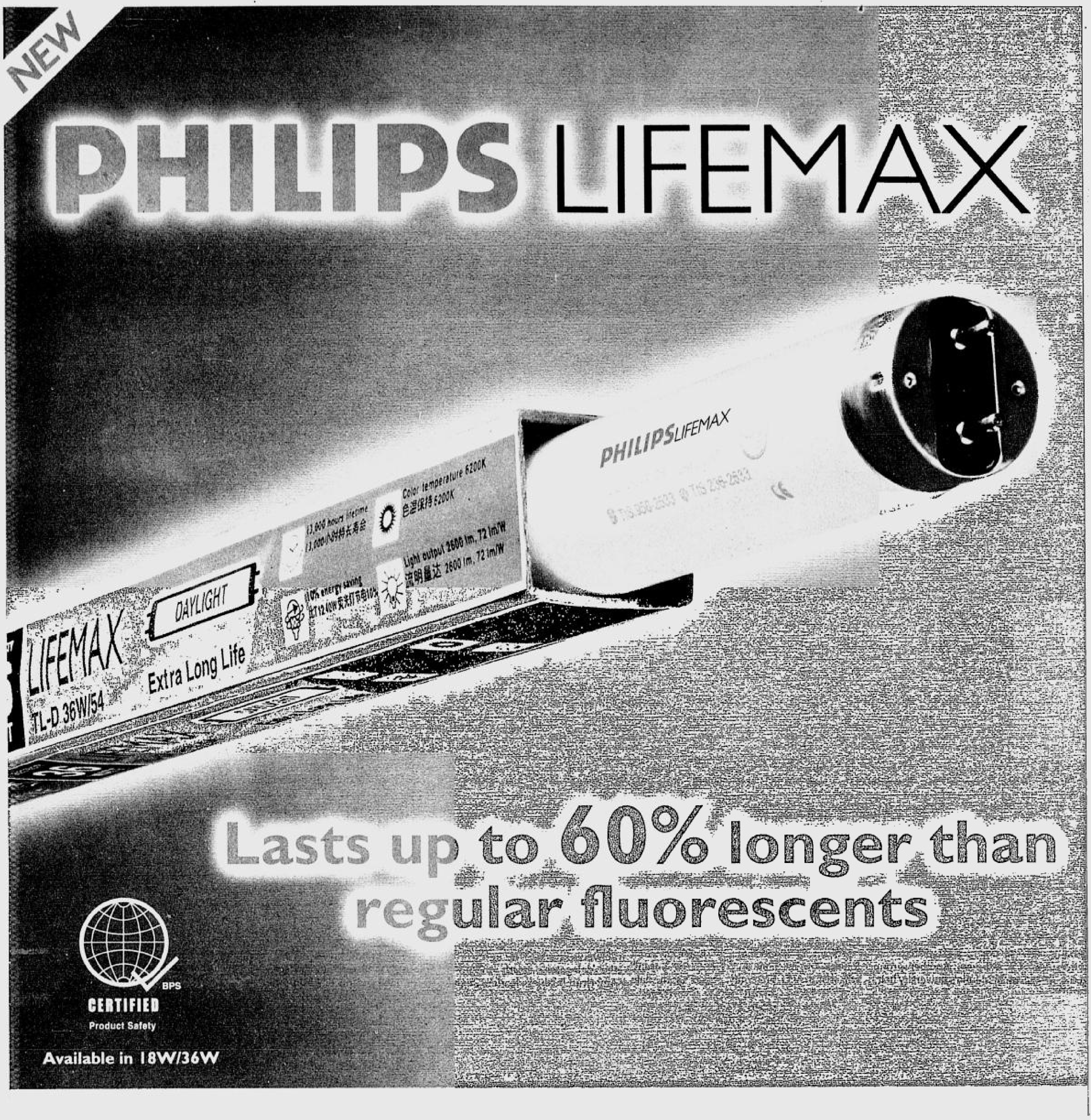
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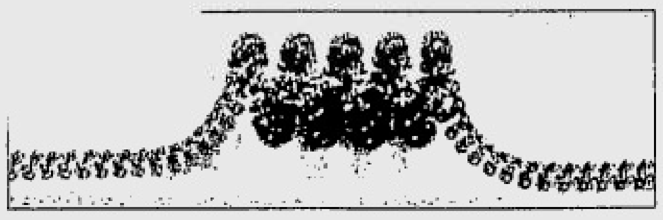

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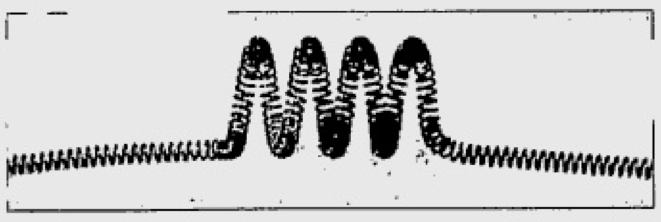

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Israel slay attempt on Saddam bared

TEL AVIV—The Israeli military planned a daring assassination attempt against Saddam Hussein in 1992 by landing commandos in Iraq and firing sophisticated missiles at him during a funeral, an Israeli legislator and media said Tuesday.

The attempt was called off after an accident in a training exercise for the mission ended in the deaths of five soldiers.

The Maariv daily reported that with the capture of Saddam, Israeli military censorship lifted its ban on publication of the full story.

Labor Party legislator Ephraim Sneh, who was a member of parliament's foreign affairs and defense committee in 1992, confirmed the Army was preparing to kill Saddam, but refused to discuss details of the operation. He said late-Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had ordered the operation.

"Like in Entebbe and other daring operations, it was Rabin who took this decision," Sneh said, referring to an Israeli operation in Uganda 1976 that freed hostages from a hijacked airplane.

The Israeli military put together the plan to kill Saddam in retaliation for Iraq's firing 39 Scud missiles at Israel during the 1991 Gulf war. However, the plan was never brought before the government for final approval.

The paper said soldiers from the Army's top commando unit, Sayeret Matkal, were to be flown into Iraq to carry out the mission.

Israeli military intelligence determined that Saddam himself, and not one of his doubles, would attend the funeral of his father-in-law in Saddam's home town, and the assassination could be carried out there. The relative was seriously ill at the time.

The commandos would set up a few kilometers from the cemetery and fire two specially designed missiles that would home in on Saddam.

After the assassination, the commandos were to be flown out of Iraq on an Israeli plane that would take off from a temporary airfield build in Iraq, the paper said.

The training mishap occurred during one of the final run-throughs on Nov. 5, 1992, at the large Tzeelim training base in the southern Negev desert.

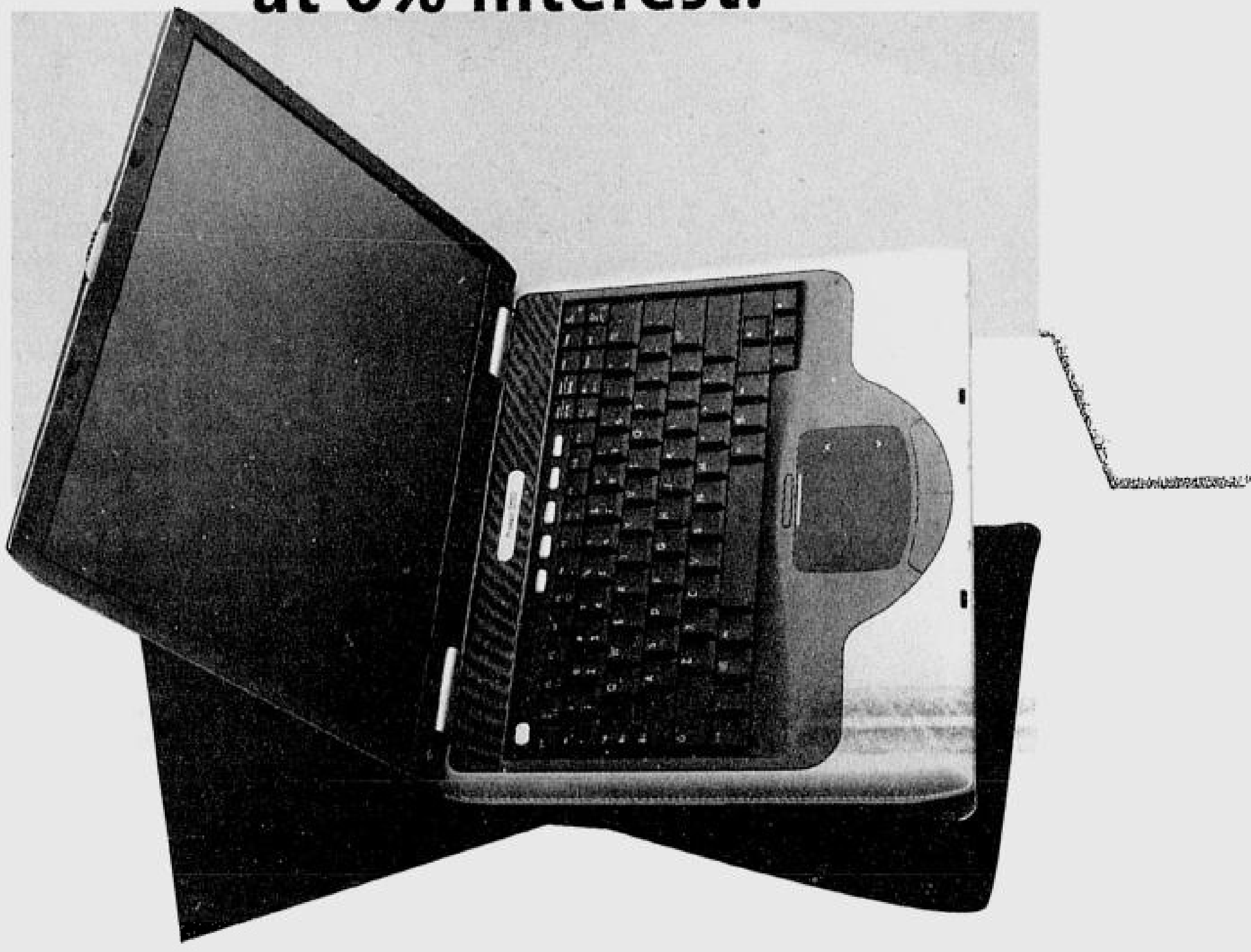
The five soldiers, also members of the elite unit, were playing the part of the targets, Saddam Hussein and his bodyguards, and the commandos were to fire a dummy missile at them. By mistake, a live missile was substituted, and the five were killed.

The mishap led to cancellation of the assassination attempt.

As predicted by Israeli intelligence, Saddam himself attended the funeral where he was to have been targeted.

Israeli military censorship clamped a tight lid on the accident and the purpose of the training, banning publication of the details. After two foreign newspapers printed stories that the target was Lebanese Hezbollah leader Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the Israeli government suspended the press credentials of the papers' reporters in Israel, charging that they had broken censorship rules.

Maariv reported Tuesday that the Nasrallah story was a government plant to distract reporters from the real target—Saddam. *AP*



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Saddam shows fate of dictators changing

ROME—Fascist leader Benito Mussolini's limp body hung upside down in a Milan square. Romanian strongman Nicolae Ceausescu lay crumpled near his dead wife moments after facing a firing squad.

A dictator's downfall rarely makes a pretty picture. Rarer still were the highly unusual images of Saddam Hussein in captivity: This toppled tyrant is alive and bedraggled for the world to see.

More often, dictators have either faced the barrel of a gun or no form of justice at all.

Adolf Hitler committed suicide as Soviet forces advanced, and his body was burned in a garden above his bunker. He thus avoided the Nuremberg trials that sent 10 of his henchmen to the gallows.

Uganda's Idi Amin was ousted from power, but took comfortable refuge in Saudi Arabia until his death this year. Many ex-dictators and their supporters could cling to images of the "good times," leaving victims little solace.

This time things may be different.

Gary J. Bass, a professor of politics and international affairs at Princeton University, says the footage of Saddam served a crucial purpose: shattering his image.

"Whatever godlike aura Saddam had has been pretty punctured by the images of him bedraggled, and some American doctor checking him for lice and poking around in his mouth," Bass said. "Doesn't get much more humiliating than that."

These images will resonate strongly in Iraq, says Mideast human rights expert Mahmood Monshipouri of Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut.

"They saw him in the TV footage as a man who was somewhat disoriented, very subdued and submissive rather than somebody who was putting up a fight," he said. "He could have killed himself as a matter of honor, not to be in the hands of the American soldiers.

Bass, who wrote "Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals," sees another crucial message in the pictures of Saddam—that his captors had spared his life.

"This is not the way that most Iraqi leaders leave office," he said.

One deposed Iraqi tyrant of 30 years ago appeared in an eerily similar image—mustachioed, bushy-browed and seated upright as a guard held his head up by the hair. There was one difference: Gen. Abdel Karim Kassem was dead.

The treatment of Saddam, Bass said, is "a remarkable act of restraint, and a political demonstration that democracies work differently than dictatorships."

Reed Brody of Human Rights Watch in New York sees a "radical change" in the way ex-tyrants have been treated in the past decade, with an increasing possibility of trial.

"For the first time in history, we're getting to the point where someone who commits crimes against humanity has a real chance of being prosecuted," he said.

Yet Saddam's trial may also offer him a grandstand. Toppled Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic, who is facing a war crimes trial in The Hague, has used the proceedings to deliver blustering speeches.

However Saddam comes off in court, he is unlikely to express regret, according to journalist Riccardo Orizio, author of "Talk of the Devil: Encounters with Seven Dictators." Orizio's book of interviews showed a series of toppled tyrants who consistently articulated sorrow only for themselves.

The ex-dictator, typically, "doesn't have any indications of remorse," Orizio said. "He feels his actions have been entirely justified." *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Taiwan hits China's 'state terrorism'

TAIPEI—Taiwan Vice President Annette Lu said on Tuesday Chinese missiles aimed at the island were a form of "state terrorism," and she gave no sign of backing down from holding a controversial referendum calling for their removal. China quickly rejected Lu's accusations, calling them "unreasonable" and warned against any attempts to split Taiwan from the mainland. Taiwan's main opposition Nationalist Party, staking out an election platform more appealing to China and the United States, said on Tuesday it opposed President Chen Shui-bian's plan for a referendum to coincide with presidential elections in March. *AFP*

World's largest book

SEATTLE—How about a little light reading? A 59-kg book the size of a dining table about Bhutan went on sale on Monday as part of an effort to raise awareness about the tiny Himalayan kingdom. "Bhutan: A Visual Odyssey Across the Last Himalayan Kingdom," has been certified as the world's largest book by Guinness World Records, according to researchers who collaborated on the project. Michael Hawley, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, raised funding and support for the book from various technology companies, including Microsoft Corp. and Amazon.com Inc. Microsoft's researchers also got involved in the book project and expeditions to the Buddhist nation because the entire book was shot digitally, said Kevin Schofield, director of university relations at Microsoft Research. Most of the proceeds from the book, which sells for $10,000 on Amazon.com Inc., will be used to fund educational programs in Bhutan, a tiny mountainous nation nestled between India and China. *Reuters*

Growing dope hazardous

SYDNEY—An Australian who called police to report thieves were trying to break into his home and steal his cannabis plants wound up getting arrested himself. Police called to a house in Adelaide, capital of the state of South Australia just after midnight discovered four men trying to steal the plants, which were being grown in two rooms there. They arrested the man—and the 23-year-old homeowner, who was later charged with illegally growing 16 cannabis plants. "He was calling from underneath his bed," a police spokesperson said. "I don't know what he was thinking. Perhaps he was smoking too much of his own product." *Reuters*

S. Korea battles bird flu virus

UMSEONG, South Korea—South Korean health officials slaughtered thousands of chickens and ducks Tuesday and sealed off a wide tract of farmland to fight the apparent spread of a highly contagious bird flu virus that could be fatal to humans, officials said.

Quarantine officials had some 3,300 ducks culled and bagged for burial and ordered another 9,000 chickens slaughtered near this small farming town in Chungcheong province, 130 km southeast of Seoul.

It was suspected that the ducks had been infected by the virus from a neighboring chicken farm where it was first detected, the ministry said.

The virulent epidemic killed more than 20,000 chickens at the farm earlier this month and the surviving 5,000 were culled, it said.

"The ducks may or may not be infected. But we decided to cull them to contain the possible spread of the virus," Kim Chang-seop, director of animal health division at the ministry, said.

Ministry officials said the number of eggs laid by the ducks had "abnormally" decreased in recent days—one of the symptoms of bird flu in ducks.

Kim said the duck farm was 2.5 km away from a chicken farm where the deadly bird flu case was first confirmed late Monday.

He said the ministry had decided to slaughter the 9,000 chickens "because their farm was located right next to the neighbor farm" infected by the bird flu virus.

The ministry's National Veterinary and Quarantine Service said the chicken deaths were caused by a variant of the same H5N1 bird flu virus that killed six people in Hong Kong in 1997.

Quarantine authorities have banned the movement of animals from all 76 poultry farms within a 10-km radius of the infected chicken farm. Some 670,000 chicken eggs hatched in the area were also destroyed, it said.

Access to the farming town was restricted and visitors and residents were disinfected at entry and exit. "Keep Out" signs were displayed at entrances to the chicken farms, witnesses said.

The National Institute of Health (NIH), affiliated with the health and welfare ministry, said it had yet to confirm that the bird flu virus found in South Korea could infect humans.

The health institute has said the H5N1 virus has variants.

"Eight people on the infected farm showed no symptoms of the disease," Jeon Byeong-yul, NIH quarantine director, told journalists late Monday.

"However, we cannot rule out the possibility of avian-to-human transmission, so we are conducting blood tests on 156 residents nearby."

There has been no reported case of humans being infected by the virus in South Korea, he said.

Health officials say it could take a month to verify how harmful the bird flu virus found in South Korea could be to humans.

In 1997, the H5N1 virus in Hong Kong killed six of 18 infected people and prompted authorities to order the slaughter of the territory's entire poultry stock.

A further 860,000 fowl were destroyed following a second outbreak in February 2002.

This is the first outbreak of the H5N1 virus reported in South Korea, though less fatal types of bird flu have been detected over the past seven years, officials said. *AFP*

Roh to quit if graft raps proven

SEOUL—South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun on Tuesday reiterated a conditional pledge to step down over a corporate slush fund probe implicating his aides and said he was ready to appear before prosecutors for questioning.

Roh, 57, apologized to the nation twice during a 45-minute press conference at the presidential Blue House for the widening scandal that has plunged South Korea into political turmoil.

He repeated a pledge made only two days ago to resign if prosecutors found his supporters had raised merely one-tenth of the illegal funds collected by his opposition rival in last year's presidential election.

"I will keep my word if it turns out to be true," said Roh. "I will take my responsibility after all for what I said."

A day after the former conservative candidate Lee Hoi-chang admitted receiving millions of dollars in illegal corporate donations, Roh said he was ready to answer questions from prosecutors if necessary.

"As I said already, as a president I am ready to face investigation without sanctuary," Roh said. "I am not voluntarily going to present myself to the prosecution office. However, if needed for the investigation I will let them question me."

But he ruled out following his former opponent Lee's lead in making a dramatic confession of all he knew about fund-raising irregularities.

He said that could lead him to falling into the trap of being accused later of lying by omission if "other things I might not know come out after my confession."

In October, Roh called for a national referendum on his presidency, saying he would resign if he lost that vote of confidence. *AFP*

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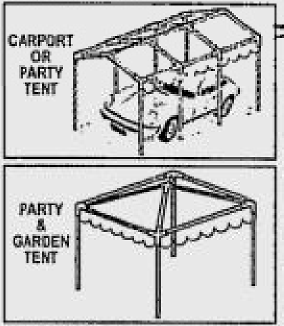

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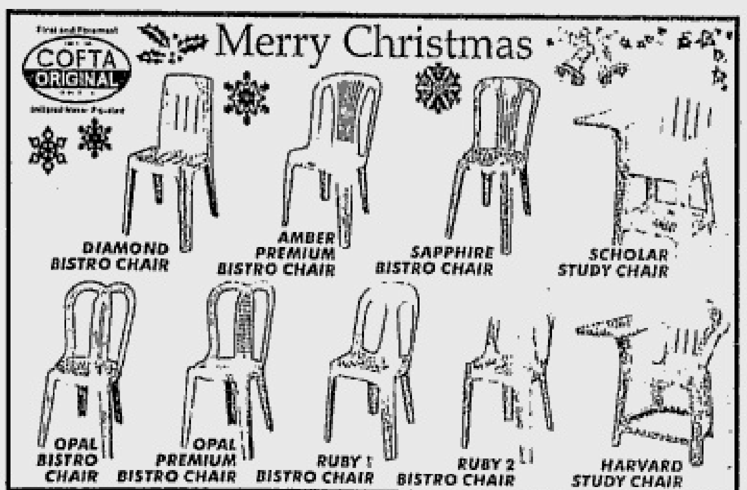

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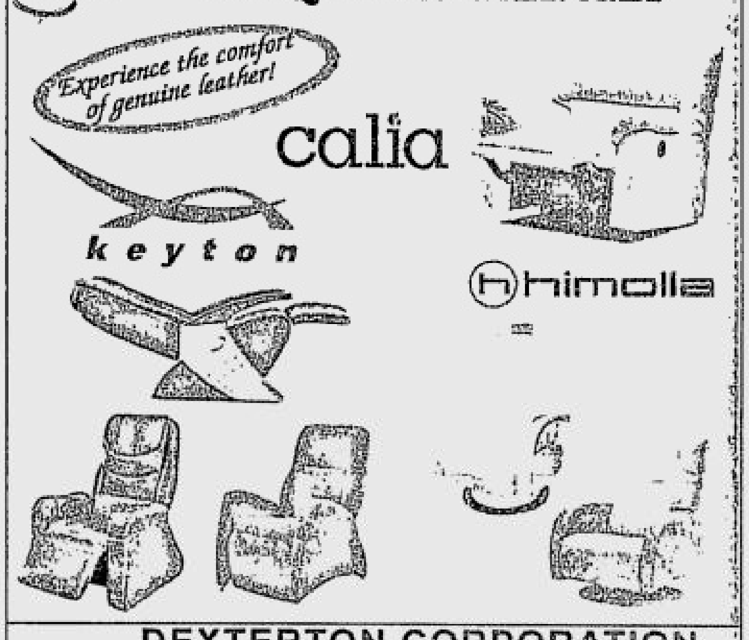
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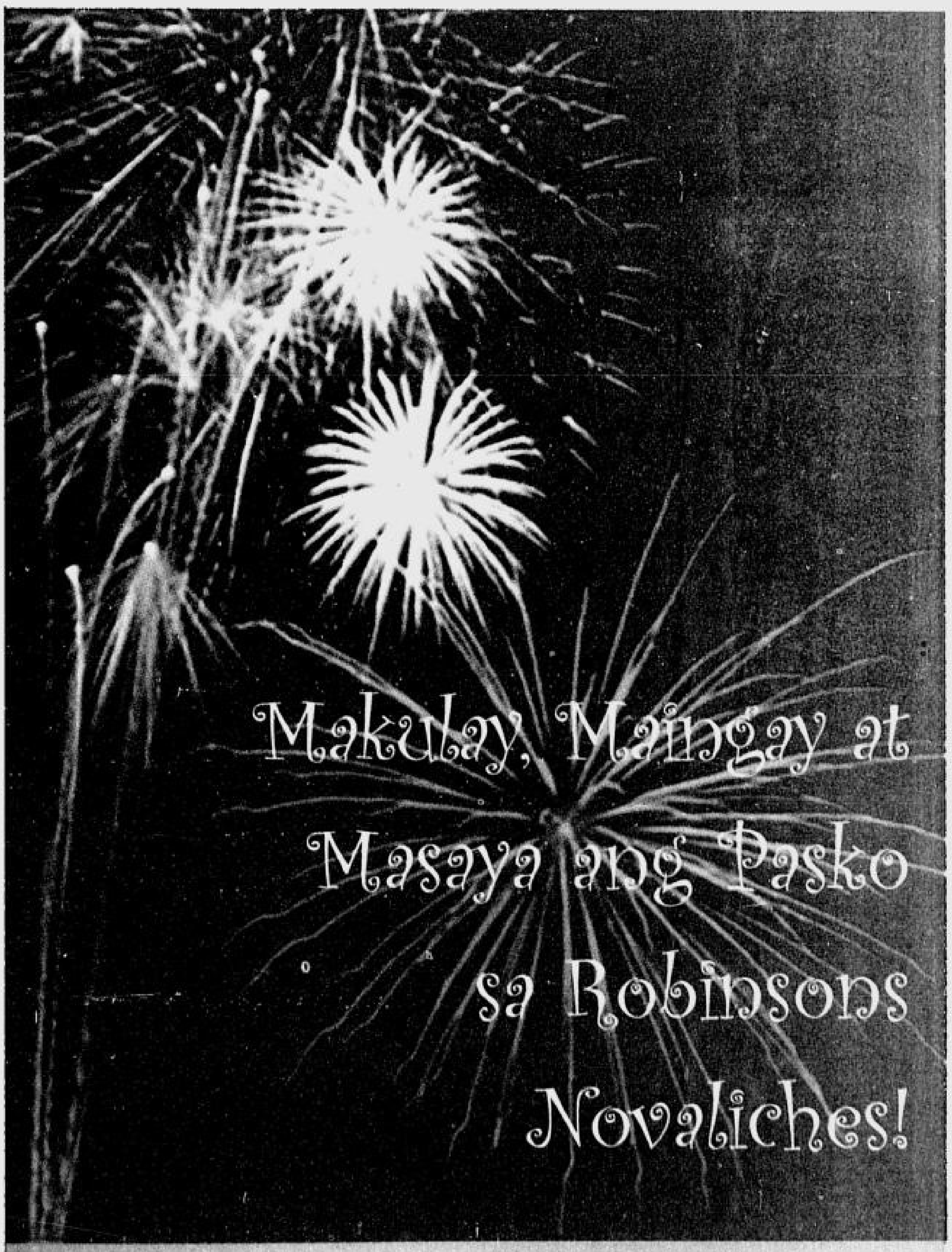
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NEAR FAIRVIEW

Powell: Ople will be sorely missed in international circles

From page A1

this time of grief," Powell said in a statement issued soon after his surgery. On behalf of the US, I extend my deepest sympathy and support to them," he said.

Close confidant

Ople also enjoyed a close working relationship with Ms Macapagal.

His youngest daughter and chief of staff, Maria Susan Osorio, recalled how Ms Macapagal had intimated to her widowed mother that she had come to rely on Ople on matters concerning foreign policy.

"She recounted how her weekly one-on-one meetings with the late secretary resulted in concrete and speedy decisions on diplomatic matters," Osorio, popularly known as Toots, said.

The President told Mrs. Ople that a big load was taken off her shoulders because she knew she could completely rely on his decisions, Osorio added.

State funeral

Ms Macapagal also personally conveyed her offer to provide a state funeral for the departed secretary, and Mrs. Ople gratefully accepted, Osorio said.

From the Christ the King Church in Greenmeadows, Quezon City, Ople's body would be brought to the Senate at 10 a.m. today for a necrological service. The convoy will pass through the Department of Labor and Employment and the Manila Bulletin offices in Intramuros, Manila, to allow former colleagues to bid the longest-serving labor secretary and newspaper columnist farewell.

After the Senate, the body will brought to the DFA headquarters,

US Secretary of State Colin Powell shakes hands with Philippine Foreign Secretary Blas F. Ople at the United Nations Sept. 22 in New York City.

GETTY IMAGES

where a Mass would be celebrated at 7 p.m. Writers and Ople's other friends from media would pay him tribute at 8 p.m.

Tomorrow, another Mass would be held at the DFA's Bulwagang Mabini, followed by another necrological service.

Ople's remains would then be brought to his hometown of Hagonoy, Bulacan, where a Mass would be held at the St. Anne's Shrine. The wake will be held at the Ople residence in Sta. Monica, Hagonoy.

The body would remain in Hagonoy the whole of Friday. It would be brought on Saturday to the Barasoain Church in Malolos City, Bulacan, for a necrological service to be attended by the President and members of the Cabinet at 7 p.m.

Another Mass will be celebrated at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, after which the party will leave for the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. The secretary will be buried at noon with full state honors.

New York too

Meanwhile, in New York City, Filipino diplomats also joined in mourning the death of Ople, who was with them just a little more than a month ago.

On Monday, the Philippine flag was flown at half-staff at the Philippine Center on Fifth Avenue in midtown Manhattan. The center houses the offices of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations and the Philippine consulate general.

Ambassador Lauro L. Baja Jr., permanent Philippine representative to the United Nations, said a memorial service has also been scheduled tomorrow morning (Wednesday afternoon in New York). A book of condolences was also opened for signing by foreign diplomats, consular representatives and members of the Filipino community.

Source of strength

"Secretary Ople has always been a source of strength and inspiration in our official and personal lives. His legacy of nationalism, compassion and statesmanship will endure for all ages," Baja said in a statement.

"He has touched so many lives and his death will surely leave a huge void in the national and international arena," Baja added.

Ople was in New York in the first week of November, when he attended a UN conference and held consultations with Baja, Deputy Permanent Representative Bayani Mercado, Consul General Linglingay Lacanlale and other Filipino diplomats.

Ople was also in New York in late September when he accompanied Ms Macapagal for the 58th UN General Assembly.

Particularly pleased

Baja recalled that during his last visit, Ople was particularly pleased with the successful campaign for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council and was looking forward to the assumption of the Philippines next month.

The Philippines and four other countries were elected by the UN General Assembly to two-year terms as non-permanent members of the Security Council during elections held in October.

The Philippine Mission was already preparing for Ople's participation as chair of the public meetings in June when the Philippines assumes the presidency of the Security Council, Baja said. *With a report from AFP*

Biggest OFW group inclined to back Roco

From page A1

Padilla and National Labor Relations Commission chair Ambassador Roy Señeres.

"Migrante would be a very big help in our campaign especially in reaching out to the D and E sectors of our society," Roco, a former senator, said.

After Roco's speech, some 50 Migrante regional and community leaders went up the stage and raised the presidential candidate's hands but didn't call on their members to vote for him.

90-percent chance

But John Monterona, vice chair and spokesperson of Migrante, told the INQUIRER that there was already a 90-percent chance that the group would endorse Roco.

"While President Macapagal-Arroyo goes on early campaign sorties to overseas Filipino communities abroad, Senator Roco consults and presents his agenda to OFW's and their families. Ms Macapagal has neglected us in her corrupt administration," Monterona said.

There are more than 360,000 registered absentee voters around the world who, claims Migrante, have influence over three more votes among their loved ones back home. "This translates to the more than one million votes that the migrant workers can deliver for a candidate," Monterona said. There are some 7 million Filipinos abroad.

"Any candidate for a national government position without the migrant's agenda in his or her program of governance won't get a single vote from the OFW sector," he added.

The nominees of the Migrante sectoral party for the party-list elections are Migrante leaders Connie Bragas-Regalado from Hong Kong, Carol Almeda from the United States, Rowena Flores from Italy, Edgar Cadano from Saudi Arabia, Dominador Olavere from Europe, Flora Belina from Hong Kong and Monterona from local chapters.

Battle of three Joses

In his speech, Roco said he would file his certificate of candidacy and announce the name of his running mate and those in his Senate slate on Rizal Day.

"As (former Cebu Gov.) Lito Osmeña said, it's going to be a battle of three Joses—Jose Pidal, Jose Velarde and (national hero) Jose Rizal. We are Jose Rizal, who's also on the one peso coin," Roco said. "Despite the millions of pesos Pidal and Velarde have, each of our peso coins would go a long way."

Jose Pidal is allegedly the alias that First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo used in opening bank accounts for the millions of pesos in undeclared campaign contributions to his wife. Jose Velarde was the alias used by deposed President Joseph Estrada for his bank account that contained at least P2 billion, which allegedly included payoffs from illegal gambling operators.

Heroes day

"We in the Alliance of HOPE believe in the values of the Filipino," Roco said when asked about the significance of timing his political declarations with the holidays in honor of Philippine national heroes.

"We have pedigree. We are a country of Jose Rizals, not just Jose Pidals and Jose Velardes," he said.

Roco declared his candidacy during the so-called "Convention of Hope" on Nov. 30, which is Andres Bonifacio Day.

The Alyansa ng Pag-asa standard-bearer said that among the front runners in the coalition's list of possible vice presidential candidates were former Cebu Gov. Osmeña, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Manuel Villar.

Drilon recently joined the Liberal Party while Villar is a member of the Senate bloc of neophyte senators.

To meet with LP

Roco said he would soon be meeting with Liberal Party stalwarts to discuss with them their platform of government. The LP is conducting consultations with presidential candidates to decide whom to support in the May elections.

Roco, however, said that the LP in Caloocan had already signified its support for his candidacy. "Caloocan Rep. Egay Erice has already thrown in his support," he said.

Roco's coalition is made up of his Aksyon Demokratiko, Osmeña's Promdi, and former Executive Secretary Renato de Villa's Reporma.

Saddam daughter demands int'l trial . . .

From page A1

biya television station.

Lion even if caged

"He would be a lion even when caged," she said.

Raghad and her sister Rana are living in Amman, Jordan, where they were given asylum in July.

She said the family would appoint an attorney to try to contact Saddam, whose whereabouts have not been released. US authorities say they are interrogating Saddam at a secret location.

Raghad told Al-Arabiya that the family wanted her father to be tried by an international tribunal, rather than a special court set up last week by the 25-member Governing Council to deal with crimes against humanity allegedly committed by Saddam and other members of his regime.

"We demand a fair and legal trial, not one held by the Governing Council which was appointed by the occupier," Raghad said.

Husbands killed

"It should be fair and international. We should have the right to defend our father legally," she said.

Saddam and his wife, Sajida Khairallah Telfah, had three daughters and two sons. The two brothers, Uday and Qusay, were killed in a shoot-out with US forces in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on July 22.

The two daughters had lived private lives and were seen by some as victims of Saddam, who ordered their husbands killed in 1996.

Travesty of justice

Several professional jurists, including a retired US judge from the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal in The Hague, said Monday that without international expertise, the Iraqi court that would try Saddam risked compromising its credibility at home and abroad. It would also miss an opportunity to create a historic record of the suffering of the Iraqi people under the dictatorship.

The Iraqi court's statute calls for the prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, as defined under international humanitarian law. But the panel of judges must be Iraqi, according to the statute, and international experts would play a mere advisory role.

3 decades of isolation

Critics of the Iraqi court said that after three decades of isolation from developments in international law, Baghdad isn't yet ready to hold fair legal proceedings in a complicated war crimes case.

In comparison, a local tribunal for war crimes in Bosnia was established only this year, eight years after the end of fighting and after the start of the trial in February 2002 of former Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic at the UN-backed Yugoslav tribunal in The Hague.

"The Iraqi tribunal should be operated like an international court," said retired Yugoslav tribunal judge Patricia Wald, an American who examined the new Iraqi court's statute. "The worst possibility would be a truly Iraqi body with Iraqi jurists and purely American advisers."

Best solution

Wald, who was among three judges to pass down the first genocide conviction at the Yugoslav tribunal against Bosnian Serb Gen. Radislav Krstic, said the best solution for Iraq would be a court jointly led by Iraqi authorities and international professionals.

"If international jurists are not involved, and I mean across the board, not just Americans, they run the risk of compromising their credibility," Wald said in a telephone interview from Washington.

Zero chance

Richard Dicker, the head of the international justice program at Human Rights Watch, estimates the chance of Saddam receiving a fair trial under the current plan as zero.

"We have serious concerns about the tribunal that was created by the Governing Council in Iraq," Dicker said. "The process was conducted with zero transparency. The concern is that Iraqi judges and lawyers don't have the necessary experience, after three decades of Baath Party rule, to conduct the enormously complicated criminal proceedings that genocide and crimes against humanity require."

No rush to judgment

The experts agreed that the Iraqi people should be part of the proceedings, but that under the current political and economic conditions, they need all the help they can get and that there should be no rush to judgment.

"The majority of his crimes were against the Iraqi people and they have a right to try him there on their territory. But because of the state of disarray, it would seem appropriate, at this time, to have an international presence on that court," said Judith Armatta of the Coalition for International Justice.

"It's a time of transition for them," she said. *AP*

Church, state worst . . .

From page A1

have at least one child but they won't oblige even with a loner.

To meddle with nature by making volitional what's naturally involuntary is to destroy nature itself. That's the bitter being bitten today by the Germans, French, Singaporeans, and their like.

JOAQUIN

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And because those concerned with that scare scarcely get a proper hearing in our country, it behooves us to lend an ear to the likes of the Philippine Center for Population and Development (PCPD), a gung-ho foundation that since 1972 has been helping implement both the nation's official population program and the unofficial programs of reform volunteers.

Condoms and pills

Explains PCPD president Ma. Socorro Camacho-Reyes: "Though the government has a family-planning program implemented through local officials and the Department of Health, funding support for that program is very weak. Services are mainly delivered by the USAID in the form of condoms and pills, IUDs and injectables—deliveries scheduled to end by year 2008 or so. Unless our government funds contraceptives for the poor who cannot afford them, our family planning program becomes just an empty gap."

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Powell: Ople will be sorely missed in international circles

From page A1

this time of grief," Powell said in a statement issued soon after his surgery. On behalf of the US, I extend my deepest sympathy and support to them," he said.

Close confidant

Ople also enjoyed a close working relationship with Ms Macapagal.

His youngest daughter and chief of staff, Maria Susan Osorio, recalled how Ms Macapagal had intimated to her widowed mother that she had come to rely on Ople on matters concerning foreign policy.

"She recounted how her weekly one-on-one meetings with the late secretary resulted in concrete and speedy decisions on diplomatic matters," Osorio, popularly known as Toots, said.

The President told Mrs. Ople that a big load was taken off her shoulders because she knew she could completely rely on his decisions, Osorio added.

State funeral

Ms Macapagal also personally conveyed her offer to provide a state funeral for the departed secretary, and Mrs. Ople gratefully accepted, Osorio said.

From the Christ the King Church in Greenmeadows, Quezon City, Ople's body would be brought to the Senate at 10 a.m. today for a necrological service. The convoy will pass through the Department of Labor and Employment and the Manila Bulletin offices in Intramuros, Manila, to allow former colleagues to bid the longest-serving labor secretary and newspaper columnist farewell.

After the Senate, the body will brought to the DFA headquarters, where a Mass would be celebrated at 7 p.m. Writers and Ople's other friends from media would pay him tribute at 8 p.m.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell shakes hands with Philippine Foreign Secretary Blas F. Ople at the United Nations Sept. 22 in New York City.

GETTY IMAGES

Tomorrow, another Mass would be held at the DFA's Bulwagang Mabini, followed by another necrological service.

Ople's remains would then be brought to his hometown of Hagonoy, Bulacan, where a Mass would be held at the St. Anne's Shrine. The wake will be held at the Ople residence in Sta. Monica, Hagonoy.

The body would remain in Hagonoy the whole of Friday. It would be brought on Saturday to the Barasoain Church in Malolos City, Bulacan, for a necrological service to be attended by the President and members of the Cabinet at 7 p.m.

Another Mass will be celebrated at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, after which the party will leave for the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. The secretary will be buried at noon with full state honors.

New York too

Meanwhile, in New York City, Filipino diplomats also joined in mourning the death of Ople, who was with them just a little more than a month ago.

On Monday, the Philippine flag was flown at half-staff at the Philippine Center on Fifth Avenue in midtown Manhattan. The center houses the offices of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations and the Philippine consulate general.

Ambassador Lauro L. Baja Jr., permanent Philippine representative to the United Nations, said a memorial service has also been scheduled tomorrow morning (Wednesday afternoon in New York). A book of condolences was also opened for signing by foreign diplomats, consular representatives and members of the Filipino community.

Source of strength

"Secretary Ople has always been a source of strength and inspiration in our official and personal lives. His legacy of nationalism, compassion and statesmanship will endure for all ages," Baja said in a statement.

"He has touched so many lives and his death will surely leave a huge void in the national and international arena," Baja added.

Ople was in New York in the first week of November, when he attended a UN conference and held consultations with Baja, Deputy Permanent Representative Bayani Mercado, Consul General Linglingay Lacanlale and other Filipino diplomats.

Ople was also in New York in late September when he accompanied Ms Macapagal for the 58th UN General Assembly.

Particularly pleased

Baja recalled that during his last visit, Ople was particularly pleased with the successful campaign for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council and was looking forward to the assumption of the Philippines next month.

The Philippines and four other countries were elected by the UN General Assembly to two-year terms as non-permanent members of the Security Council during elections held in October.

The Philippine Mission was already preparing for Ople's participation as chair of the public meetings in June when the Philippines assumes the presidency of the Security Council, Baja said. *With a report from AFP*

Biggest OFW group inclined to back Roco

From page A1

Padilla and National Labor Relations Commission chair Ambassador Roy Señeres.

"Migrante would be a very big help in our campaign especially in reaching out to the D and E sectors of our society," Roco, a former senator, said.

After Roco's speech, some 50 Migrante regional and community leaders went up the stage and raised the presidential candidate's hands but didn't call on their members to vote for him.

90-percent chance

But John Monterona, vice chair and spokesperson of Migrante, told the INQUIRER that there was already a 90-percent chance that the group would endorse Roco.

"While President Macapagal-Arroyo goes on early campaign sorties to overseas Filipino communities abroad, Senator Roco consults and presents his agenda to OFW's and their families. Ms Macapagal has neglected us in her corrupt administration," Monterona said.

There are more than 360,000 registered absentee voters around the world who, claims Migrante, have influence over three more votes among their loved ones back home. "This translates to the more than one million votes that the migrant workers can deliver for a candidate," Monterona said. There are some 7 million Filipinos abroad.

"Any candidate for a national government position without the migrant's agenda in his or her program of governance won't get a single vote from the OFW sector," he added.

The nominees of the Migrante sectoral party for the party-list elections are Migrante leaders Connie Bragas-Regalado from Hong Kong, Carol Almeda from the United States, Rowena Flores from Italy, Edgar Cadano from Saudi Arabia, Dominador Olavere from Europe, Flora Belina from Hong Kong and Monterona from local chapters.

Battle of three Joses

In his speech, Roco said he would file his certificate of candidacy and announce the name of his running mate and those in his Senate slate on Rizal Day.

"As (former Cebu Gov.) Lito Osmeña said, it's going to be a battle of three Joses—Jose Pidal, Jose Velarde and (national hero) Jose Rizal. We are Jose Rizal, who's also on the one peso coin," Roco said. "Despite the millions of pesos Pidal and Velarde have, each of our peso coins would go a long way."

Jose Pidal is allegedly the alias that First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo used in opening bank accounts for the millions of pesos in undeclared campaign contributions to his wife. Jose Velarde was the alias used by deposed President Joseph Estrada for his bank account that contained at least P2 billion, which allegedly included payoffs from illegal gambling operators.

Heroes day

"We in the Alliance of HOPE believe in the values of the Filipino," Roco said when asked about the significance of timing his political declarations with the holidays in honor of Philippine national heroes.

"We have pedigree. We are a country of Jose Rizals, not just Jose Pidals and Jose Velardes," he said.

Roco declared his candidacy during the so-called "Convention of Hope" on Nov. 30, which is Andres Bonifacio Day.

The Alyansa ng Pag-asa standard-bearer said that among the front runners in the coalition's list of possible vice presidential candidates were former Cebu Gov. Osmeña, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Manuel Villar.

Drilon recently joined the Liberal Party while Villar is a member of the Senate bloc of neophyte senators.

To meet with LP

Roco said he would soon be meeting with Liberal Party stalwarts to discuss with them their platform of government. The LP is conducting consultations with presidential candidates to decide whom to support in the May elections.

Roco, however, said that the LP in Caloocan had already signified its support for his candidacy. "Caloocan Rep. Egay Erice has already thrown in his support," he said.

Roco's coalition is made up of his Aksyon Demokratiko, Osmeña's Promdi, and former Executive Secretary Renato de Villa's Reporma.

Saddam daughter demands int'l trial . . .

From page A1

biya television station.

Lion even if caged

"He would be a lion even when caged," she said.

Raghad and her sister Rana are living in Amman, Jordan, where they were given asylum in July.

She said the family would appoint an attorney to try to contact Saddam, whose whereabouts have not been released. US authorities say they are interrogating Saddam at a secret location.

Raghad told Al-Arabiya that the family wanted her father to be tried by an international tribunal, rather than a special court set up last week by the 25-member Governing Council to deal with crimes against humanity allegedly committed by Saddam and other members of his regime.

"We demand a fair and legal trial, not one held by the Governing Council which was appointed by the occupier," Raghad said.

Husbands killed

"It should be fair and international. We should have the right to defend our father legally," she said.

Saddam and his wife, Sajida Khairallah Telfah, had three daughters and two sons. The two brothers, Uday and Qusay, were killed in a shoot-out with US forces in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on July 22.

The two daughters had lived private lives and were seen by some as victims of Saddam, who ordered their husbands killed in 1996.

Travesty of justice

Several professional jurists, including a retired US judge from the Yugoslav war crimes tribunal in The Hague, said Monday that without international expertise, the Iraqi court that would try Saddam risked compromising its credibility at home and abroad. It would also miss an opportunity to create a historic record of the suffering of the Iraqi people under the dictatorship.

The Iraqi court's statute calls for the prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide, as defined under international humanitarian law. But the panel of judges must be Iraqi, according to the statute, and international experts would play a mere advisory role.

3 decades of isolation

Critics of the Iraqi court said that after three decades of isolation from developments in international law, Baghdad isn't yet ready to hold fair legal proceedings in a complicated war crimes case.

In comparison, a local tribunal for war crimes in Bosnia was established only this year, eight years after the end of fighting and after the start of the trial in February 2002 of former Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic at the UN-backed Yugoslav tribunal in The Hague.

"The Iraqi tribunal should be operated like an international court," said retired Yugoslav tribunal judge Patricia Wald, an American who examined the new Iraqi court's statute. "The worst possibility would be a truly Iraqi body with Iraqi jurists and purely American advisers."

Best solution

Wald, who was among three judges to pass down the first genocide conviction at the Yugoslav tribunal against Bosnian Serb Gen. Radislav Krstic, said the best solution for Iraq would be a court jointly led by Iraqi authorities and international professionals.

"If international jurists are not involved, and I mean across the board, not just Americans, they run the risk of compromising their credibility," Wald said in a telephone interview from Washington.

Zero chance

Richard Dicker, the head of the international justice program at Human Rights Watch, estimates the chance of Saddam receiving a fair trial under the current plan as zero.

"We have serious concerns about the tribunal that was created by the Governing Council in Iraq," Dicker said. "The process was conducted with zero transparency. The concern is that Iraqi judges and lawyers don't have the necessary experience, after three decades of Baath Party rule, to conduct the enormously complicated criminal proceedings that genocide and crimes against humanity require."

No rush to judgment

The experts agreed that the Iraqi people should be part of the proceedings, but that under the current political and economic conditions, they need all the help they can get and that there should be no rush to judgment.

"The majority of his crimes were against the Iraqi people and they have a right to try him there on their territory. But because of the state of disarray, it would seem appropriate, at this time, to have an international presence on that court," said Judith Armatta of the Coalition for International Justice.

"It's a time of transition for them," she said. *AP*

Church, state worst . . .

From page A1

have at least one child but they won't oblige even with a loner.

To meddle with nature by making volitional what's naturally involuntary is to destroy nature itself. That's the bitter being bitten today by the Germans, French, Singaporeans, and their like.

JOAQUIN

"Well, that's their problem" is the Philippine react. "More babies than we can afford is our problem."

This may seem like being given a magic eye to see tomorrow and refusing to use it. But it's true we should act only on today's pressures, and our today is not the German or French or Singaporean today. What do we care about their population lack? Population excess is what scares us.

And because those concerned with that scare scarcely get a proper hearing in our country, it behooves us to lend an ear to the likes of the Philippine Center for Population and Development (PCPD), a gung-ho foundation that since 1972 has been helping implement both the nation's official population program and the unofficial programs of reform volunteers.

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Just-pretend policies

The grotesque result of just-pretend policies is that small families are enjoyed by those who can afford big ones, while those who cannot afford them are overloaded with big families!

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Which means more hunger, less ability; more sloth, no development.

"Development is essentially cultural change," Pernia says. "If we stick to our old-fashioned culture we'll never progress, we'll continue living in the dark ages."

And it is not true, he says, "that since a people is its culture, it cannot change its culture."

"Spain did, Italy did," he points out. "Large families were also an age-old tradition in Latin America. Yet today Brazil's growth rate is less than 2 percent. Mexico, too, has reduced its growth rate to less than 2 percent. It's only the Philippines in this group that's a laggard in population management—and therefore the laggard in economic development."

Laggard government

The laggard is not the citizenry but the government, which pretends to be serious and sincere about its population program but actually could not care less about it.

"Officially the policy is to keep population growth at a level or rate sustainable by the state of the economy. Population must not be allowed a runaway growth," says Garrucho.

Growth must be aligned with the march of the economy?

"That's what is said on paper, articulated as policy, along with provisions for the spreading of information and services," he says. "But one particular clause bidding the government to respect religious beliefs in this matter is being used as an excuse for inaction in the entire matter."

Another such excuse is the law against abortion, and one group's opinion that, except for continence and the rhythm method, all forms of family planning are abortionist.

But Reyes points out that, for instance, using the pill is not abortion because it prevents ovulation and, thus, pregnancy—and how can you abort what is not there? She further clarifies that, if Filipinos keep on having more children, it's not primarily because of religious beliefs.

CHILDREN join demonstration at the Rizal Park to ask government to pay more attention to them. PDI FILE PHOTO

Low in the hierarchy

"Religious reasons, as surveys show, rank low in the hierarchy of reasons for not practicing family planning," Reyes says, examining the main reasons cited in research findings.

She ticks them off: "an excess fertility they cannot control because they don't know how or can't afford the means," and early marriage "because our young people are not in school when they should still be there, and the result is their marrying as early as their early teens."

"But a slackened social mobility is the gravest reason," she adds. "Statistics prove that as lower-class families move up on the social scale, they have fewer and fewer children."

Is Philippine population growth so rapid because our social mobility has become so sluggish?

It follows then that the best friend of family planning is the family that wants to improve its lot and move up the economic and social ladder.

And its worst enemies? Church and State, learning and labor, and family planning itself.

Wrestling phantoms

But how can family planning itself be the worst enemy of family planning? By being stopped by barriers that are not there.

It has been proved over and over that Filipinos in general simply ignore Church and State when it comes to the practice of family planning.

The law says it respects religious beliefs? But what if the folk concerned do not respect those supposed religious beliefs—and precisely because we the people, far from regarding them as religious, consider those "beliefs" to be utterly irrelevant to the Gospel of Christ?

Yet the family planning movement continues to wrestle phantoms and to be cowed by what itself keeps proving to be utter illusion.

The PCPD knows that family planning is accepted by the overwhelming majority of Filipinos, who are Catholic, and that it's practiced with a clear conscience because Filipinos do not believe condom and pill to be in the same league with Mass and rosary.

Yet the Philippine family planning movement continues to fight a Church that the public itself has ousted from this particular ground. And the family planning advocates continue to take on politicos who won't stand up for family planning for fear of a poll backlash.

Not a political issue

But here again, anybody with eyes can see that Filipinos don't regard family planning as a political issue.

Fidel Ramos won the presidency although as a Protestant he could be viewed as friendly to family planning (besides having the Roman honchos against him). Family planning champion Juan Flavier got into the Senate—and with flying honors—to the shock of those who were sure they could kill him at the polls.

If Sen. Panfilo Lacson loses in 2004, it won't be because he rooted for Rubber against Rhythm.

Yet time and effort are wasted trying to convince the government's policymakers that family planning is good for the poor, for the economy, for learning, for business, and for labor.

Schools that now bar the weak-minded may be emboldened by a bright new younger generation into preaching family planning right in the classroom. And labor that now groans how so many unemployed Pinoys are unemployable because unwitting, may likewise be gladdened into telling the lower classes where lies their liberation.

Unstated stand

But the policymakers in the corridors of power don't have to be convinced: the sizes of their own families state their unstated stand. If it's their funding power that family planning would enlist, then what should be done is to mobilize people power, Edsa-style, and push family planning as an issue in every election, to show again and again, once and for all, if the Church is, or is not, a force at the polls.

Let the public say so.

That's the way to convince politicos. And the way to have a government unafraid of family planning, whether as taboo words, or as taboo works.

As Reyes says: "All we ask is that the government respect its own policy, which is: to make available all worthy methods of family planning, so married couples can choose and make their own decision."

Garrucho is even more emphatic: "It is the government's responsibility to help those couples implement their decision and to make sure all good-quality family planning methods—the whole array—are universally available."

And Pernia jots down this prescription to remedy a good deal of our country's woes: "a clear and consistent population policy, matched by an adequately funded population program."

Speak up in 2004

So: is top-level government support for family planning and the population program forthcoming or not?

Why waste time waiting for a reply from the divine ones? The public can speak up in 2004 and shape the answer to that question.

Reyes has a point: "We need to get our act together and move in the same direction. If we just keep on doing what we have been doing before, the situation will get worse. We have to do something more dramatic and with greater impact, something bigger, because the population problem now is much, much bigger."

FPJ to Muslims: No backing out

From page A1

The agenda included resuming the peace talks, the rehabilitation of war-torn areas in Mindanao, protection of Muslim traders and the investigation of the bombings of mosques in Davao City.

Poe did not comment on the agenda in his remarks. Instead, he said, in Filipino: "For four or five hundred years until today, Mindanao has inherited nothing but abuse. Our countrymen, even nature, were abused. This inheritance has created conflict. But you have fought for the belief that the future will be bright. And we can achieve that future if we join together for one vision. One vision ... for progress, order and peace in all Mindanao. One vision, one Mindanao." (*See original in accompanying Box.*)

Poe's remarks at Club Filipino

"MAY APAT o limang daang taong nakaraan ang Mindanao hanggang sa ngayon inherited, nakamana ng pagsasamantala. Pinagsamantalahan ng ating mga mamamayan pati na ang ating kalikasan.

At dahil doon sa minana nating iyon, ito'y nagbigay ng hidwaan. Ngunit ng dahil sa inyo, nanindigan kayo, nanindigan kayo sa paniniwalang meron pang magandang umaga," he went on, drawing applause.

"At ang umagang iyon ay makakamit natin kung magsasama tayo sa iisang hangarin. Isang hangaring (inaudible) sa kaunlaran kaayusan at kapayapaan ng buong Mindanao. Isang hangarin isang Mindanao. Maraming salamat po."

Opposition candidate

In the short interview, Poe said his talks with the other opposition presidential aspirant, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, did not mean that he was willing to withdraw his candidacy.

Both want to be the opposition's standard-bearer.

Asked if he was pushing through with his candidacy, the publicity-shy actor replied, "A, oo (Ah, yes)."

"We're in the process of forming our senatorial slate and choosing the vice presidential candidate," he added, in Filipino.

He said he was talking to Lacson "so that the transition would be very clear." He did not elaborate.

"We're not back in (sic) square one," he added.

Formula

Asked what his "formula" would be to settle the issue with Lacson, Poe said: "The formula is we always hope for the best at magkaliwanagan nang husto (and clarify matters well)."

He refused to comment on his second round of talks with Lacson, and escaped further media questions by leaving the place early.

He had been expected to greet the 200-plus delegates to the congress.

Poe arrived promptly at 11 a.m, with only a handful of bodyguards.

He was not accompanied by any politician, not even Sotto.

Poe stayed for 40 minutes, and would have stayed longer if he did not have to evade the media.

Pendatun Disimban, president of the Assalam party-list group, said Poe commanded respect among Muslims "because he made a lot of movies portraying Muslims."

Idol

"We saw how Muslims love FPJ not only because he's an actor and our idol but because he's instrumental in having our culture, religion, history and struggle understood by our Christian brothers through his movies where he played a Muslim. That's why our Muslim brothers love and support our next president," Disimban declared.

Pimentel as VP

He said his group wanted Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who hails from Mindanao, to be Poe's running mate, and Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen as part of Poe's senatorial lineup.

When asked what he thought of Assalam's proposed agenda, Poe said: "We will study it. *Yun mga pwedeng* i-implement *gagawin* (We'll implement those that can be implemented)."

Lacson's reaction

Reacting to Angara's disclosure, Lacson said he was still waiting for his next meeting with Poe, set for this week.

"Let's see," Lacson said.

But Lacson said he also had plans to file his candidacy either on Dec. 29, 30 or Jan. 1.

Lacson had earlier said that he and Poe and a small group would meet this week to thresh out details on how they could unite the opposition, which is split between the two candidates.

Lacson also said he would not put too much weight on Poe's categorical answer in Club Filipino, because it was typical for candidates to make such "posturings."

"When you are asked by your supporters, definitely you won't show that you are vacillating," he said. "Definitely you would say that you would go for it. In the same manner that whenever I'm asked, I'm determined to go for it."

Lacson said he would know in his next meeting with Poe "where we both stand."

Disgruntled

He reiterated his claim that Poe was disgruntled over his proclamation as the standard bearer of the Angara-led Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

Lacson issued a statement saying that apparently Poe's "political backers" were misleading him after the latter complained to him in their meeting last weekend about his proclamation.

In his statement, Lacson said Poe "is concerned (about) how some of his political backers are trying to railroad and manipulate the selection process for the united opposition's presidential candidate."

But Sotto said he met Poe last night and "he has not mentioned anything that he was dissatisfied with the selection process or was eyeing other selection processes."

"I can only wish that they would stop thinking for him (Poe)," Sotto said.

Senate slate

Sotto said his meeting with Poe the other night threshed out plans and organizational setup, including the media bureau of his presidential campaign.

Angara said Poe was expected to file his candidacy along with his "full slate"—his running mate and senatorial candidates.

This would include reelectionist Senators Aquilino Pimentel, John Osmeña and Teresa Aquino-Oreta, Angara.

As for Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who bolted the Laban ng Demokratikong Partido in favor of Raul Roco's Alliance of Hope, Angara merely said: "We want to tell him that getting out of LDP has not been helpful to him."

The senatorial slate of Poe might include Rep. Imee Marcos and Francisco Tatad, Angara said.

LDP war heats up

But the war between the two factions of the LDP is heating up after Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino accused Angara, the party president, of being the party's dictator.

Aquino sent a scathing letter to Angara, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, over the weekend. The Makati congressman questioned his replacement as the party's secretary general.

"The LDP was founded by my late brother Benigno Aquino Jr. and I am not going to stand idly by and watch you drag the party down the road to perdition," Aquino wrote Angara on Dec. 12.

Aquino charged that his replacement as secretary general by LDP deputy secretary general and former Antique Gov. Enrique Zaldivar was "clearly illegal and unwarranted."

Confident on unity

But in another development, Aquino joined, Angara's sister, Aurora Rep. Bellaflor-Angara Castillo, in saying they were confident that the party would end up rallying behind a single candidate.

Aquino said that Poe and Lacson would meet within the next few days to iron out the differences between the two camps supporting them and to decide who should give way to whom.

"They both realized the need for a single candidate. Despite the bickerings, what is important is there should only be one candidate," Aquino said after the Christmas party tendered by the minority bloc for House reporters. ***With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, Cynthia Balana, Alcuin Papa, Christian Esguerra***

Lawmaker blames Neri for deficit

From page A1

the outcome of next year's elections.

GMA, too

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday echoed Neri's observation that the lobbying of big business interests in national elections was hampering economic recovery.

"As I have urged since Day One of my presidency, we must unite to stop vested interests from exploiting the country's flawed politics for selfish ends to the detriment of our nation," she said.

The proposed indexation of sin taxes involves the automatic adjustment of taxes every two years to prevent the value of sin taxes from being eroded by inflation.

The taxation of sin products was shifted in 1997 from ad valorem, one based on value, to specific, which is based on the volume of cigarette and liquor products sold.

To net gov't P7B

The House ways and means committee has yet to pass the indexation bill. The indexation of sin taxes is estimated to net the government at least P7 billion in additional revenue next year.

Javier earlier said that the budget deficit for 2004 would balloon to a staggering P204 billion because Congress had failed to pass the indexation measure.

He recalled that it was Neri who convinced lawmakers that a shift to specific taxation was best for the country "even though it was viewed as favoring the interests of multinational tobacco companies."

Under the specific taxation system, revenue collections depend on volume, hence if "volume drops, so does tax collections," Javier explained.

He said the specific tax system worked initially, but its fixed rate did not adjust to inflation. "This is reflected by the fact that while a pack of Philip Morris sells for P25 now as against Hope's P18, both pay the same tax of P8.96 per pack."

'Irresponsible'

Javier decried as "irresponsible" Neri's claim that Congress was beholden to vested groups.

"Who was Neri fronting for when he advocated for a shift to specific tax?" Javier said. "And who is pushing him now to pressure Congress into passing the indexation bill on sin products?"

The cigarette and alcohol industries are already heavily taxed, according to Javier. "It's time to move on and tax other products and services like soft drinks and text messaging," he said.

Agile's mistake?

"Neri and his friends in Agile just don't want to admit that they made a mistake in 1996. Now, the country is paying for their costly error and they have the nerve to blame Congress for it," Javier said. Agile is a group funded by the United States Agency for International Development. ***Reports from Carlito Pablo and Juliet Labog-Javellana***

Hot babe mad at Viva mag showing her nude

From page A1

Viva Films, publisher of the recently launched Hotstuff magazine.

But Legarda proceeded to lecture Taylor, who was complaining about the publication in the magazine of a photograph showing her nude.

The senator also turned to Taylor's lawyer Cresencio Aspiras Jr. and asked: "What is she complaining about? We cannot deny that [she appears] in ... bold films. She's a sexy star."

Taylor, a member of the hugely popular Viva Hot Babes, waited an hour to see Legarda. She was accompanied by Aspiras and her road manager Paola Punla.

"I felt violated," said Taylor, a six-year veteran of show biz who has appeared in eight sexually charged films for the last two years.

Legarda urged the starlet to complete a college education.

"You're young, you're pretty, and, I can see, you're very articulate. There's no need to peddle your body. I don't want to lecture you. But what I'm saying is that you will be open to [abuse]," the senator said.

When asked by Legarda if she intended to continue appearing in sexy films, a red-faced Taylor shyly said: "I think I'm actually changing [my image]."

To which Aspiras added: "This should be a good start for Maui to change, to choose the films she would be appearing in."

Stolen shots

Taylor insisted that she did not see the offending photo prior to its publication.

"They never consulted us. The pictures were never shown to us. I saw it [when it was already published]," she said.

Pointing to the magazine, she told Legarda that it carried a frontal photo showing her nude from the waist down. She said she had a contract explicitly prohibiting the showing of frontal nudity, except in topless poses.

"But doesn't topless mean frontal nudity?" Legarda said.

Taylor explained that she had only agreed to be shown topless but that the magazine staff took full shots and published one.

"I guess I [can] call them stolen shots," she said. "Those were my unguarded moments. I trusted them so much."

Citing the law prohibiting the publication of obscene materials, Aspiras said he was studying the "legal actions to take."

But he could not say whether his client would soon file a case for breach of contract against Viva Films.

Not a stunt

Taylor denied that her protest was a mere publicity stunt aimed at shoring up her sagging career.

But Legarda also recognized that Taylor's bosses at Viva could have gone overboard: "It appears that there is a violation of your rights even if you admit that you are a sexy star. We don't deny that. But they (Viva owners) went beyond what was agreed upon, and you felt violated."

Legarda said she had filed two proposed measures prohibiting the publication of lewd photographs and sex articles, but that these had yet to be passed into law.

"What is it I can do for you?" she asked Taylor. "Of course, aside from helping you and others who have become victims, we need to enact these bills. But you know, the process takes quite a while. But you still need to fight for your rights."

She promised to study Taylor's case and make the appropriate referrals.

In the meantime, she told the starlet, "I think, first you should talk to them. Review the contract. Make them explain why those photographs were printed at once."

Heat is on

But the heat is on for the skin trade.

According to Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida, the Philippine Alliance Against Pornography (PAAP) has teamed up with civil society groups in preparing to file charges against publishers of lewd magazines and tabloids as well as sexy starlets who show too much skin.

Calida met yesterday at the Department of Justice with PAAP spokesperson Almo Filomeno, Dante Jimenez of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, and lawyer Leonard de Vera of the Equal Justice For All (E-Just).

"They came here to get the support of the DOJ, and we told them that there is a standing order from the President to fight pornography," Calida said, adding:

"They already have the evidence. It's just a matter of filing the formal complaint. [The legal action] will cut across the board—from the high and mighty to the lowly ones who purvey smut."

Calida said last week that the government was poised to crack down against magazines and tabloids showing indecent pictures of women.

"This is a fair warning to publishers of obscene magazines and tabloids: Stop it before it's too late. We will not hesitate to file charges against you," he said.

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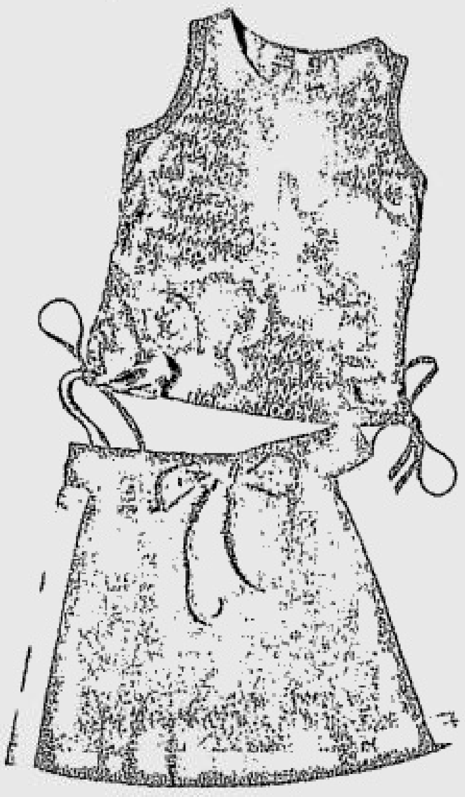
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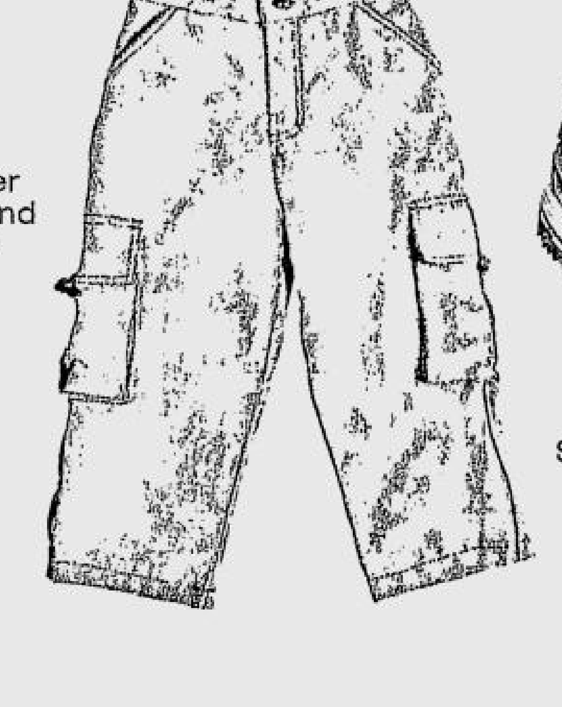
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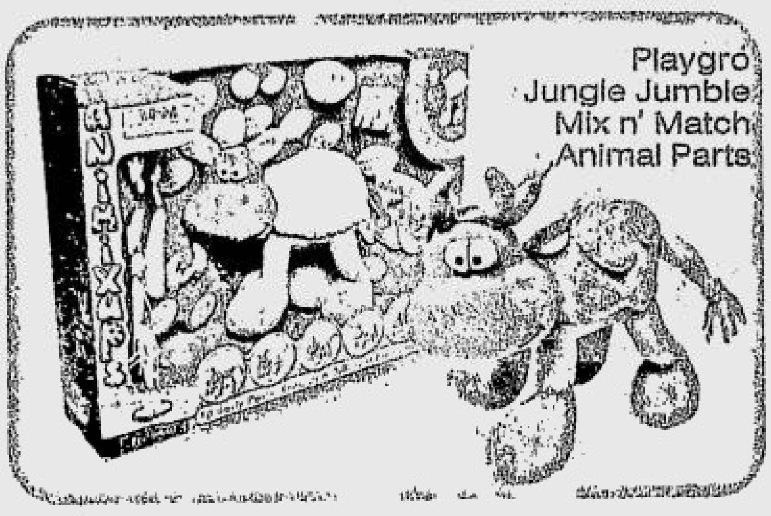

Playgro
Jungle Jumble
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Carters Knit Rompers

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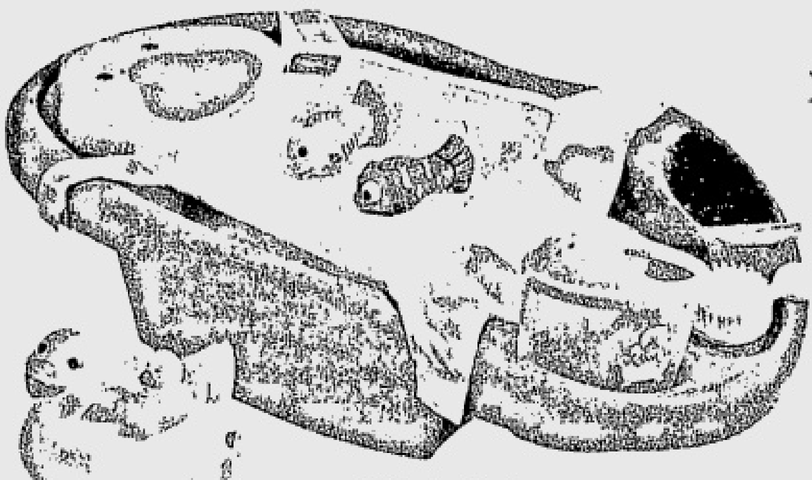

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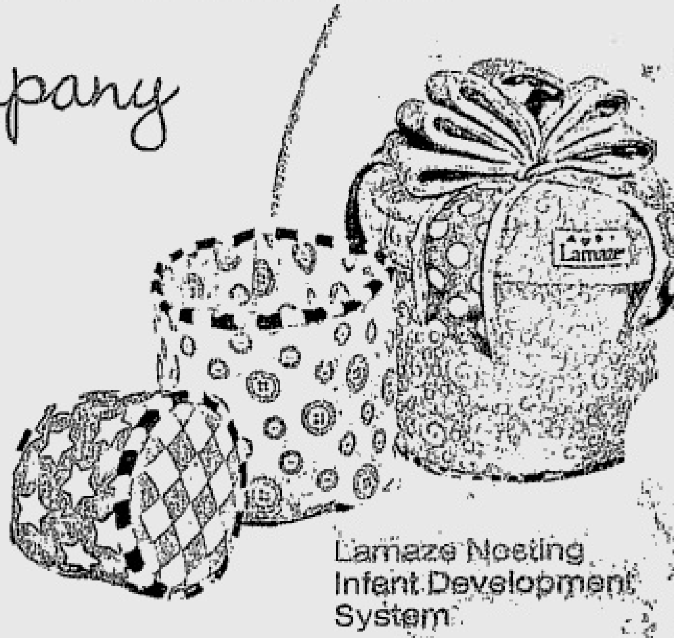
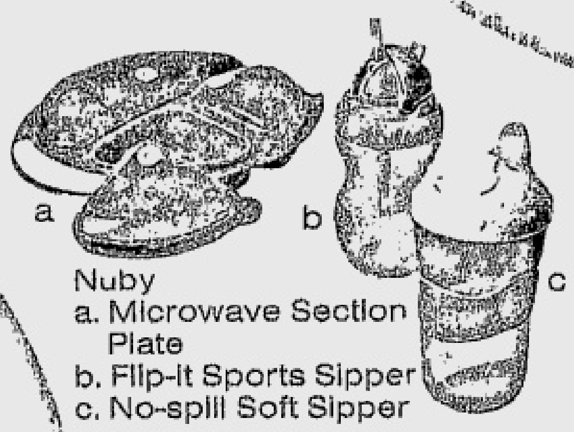


Lamaze Nesting
Infant Development
System



Nuby
a. Microwave Section
Plate
b. Flip-it Sports Sipper
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BabyAce
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Aluminum
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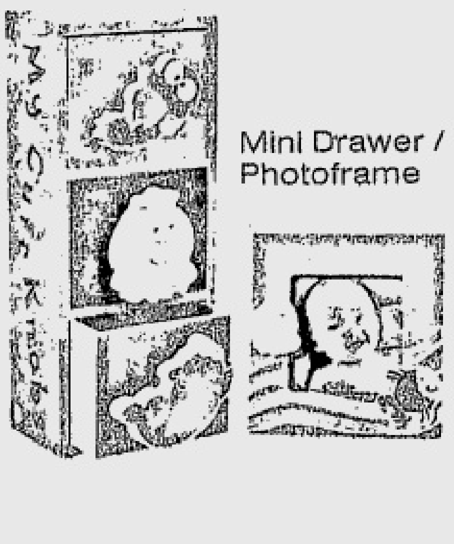
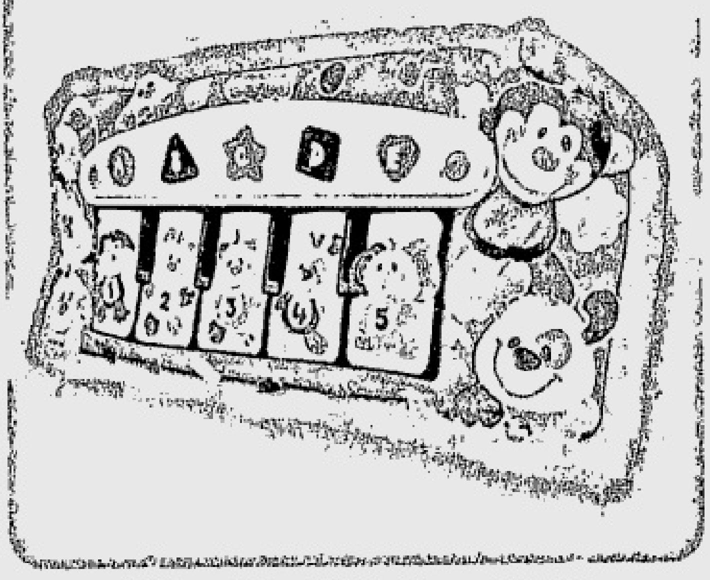


Mini Drawer /
Photoframe



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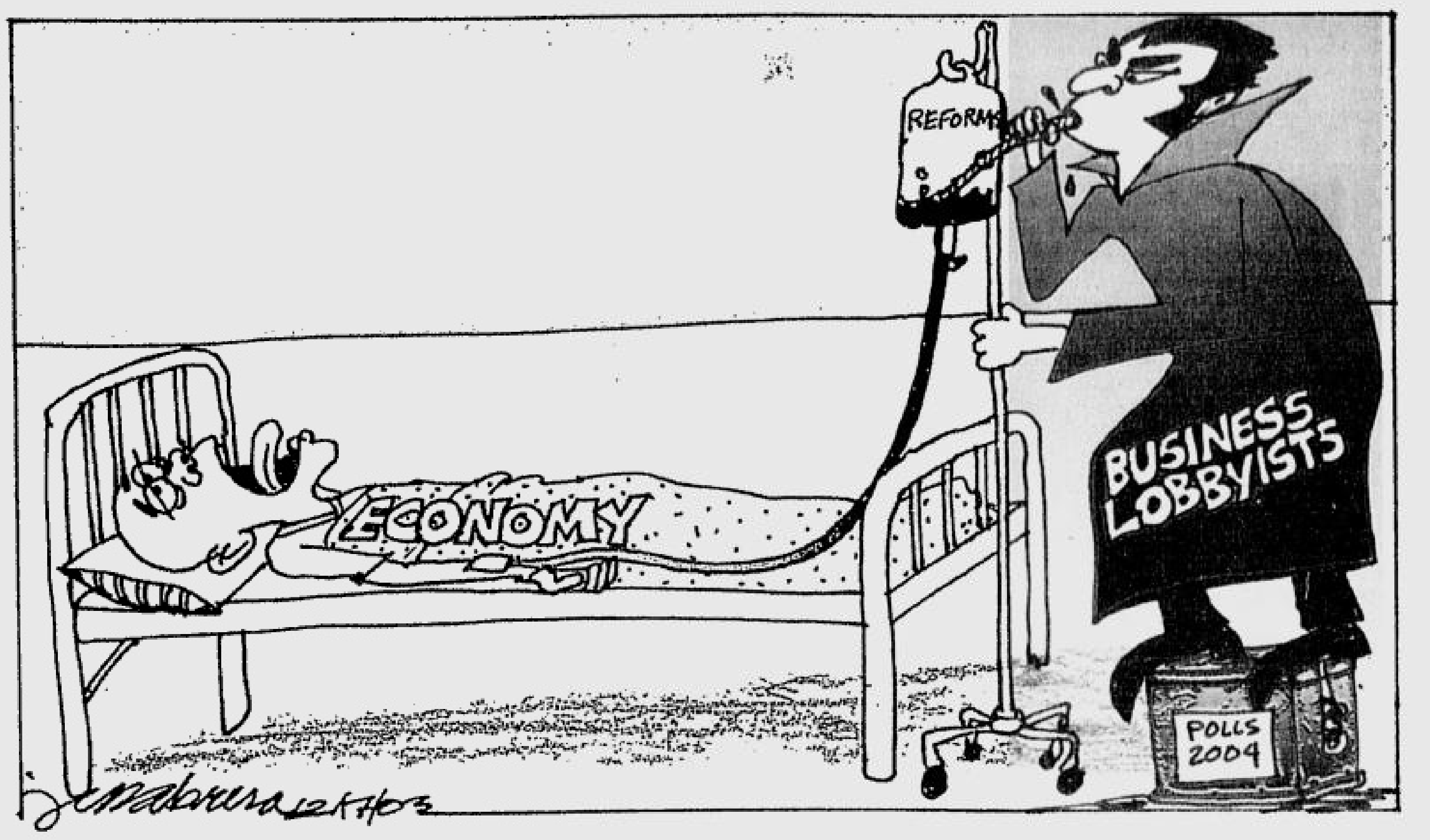


Party to a crime

EDITORIAL

TIS the season to be jolly, but for the communist rebels it is not necessarily because of Christmas. It's more because the election season is near at hand, which is the season that usually brings a financial windfall to the New People's Army, courtesy of the candidates. In next year's national elections, the NPA could collect as much as P2.25 billion from the issuance of "permits to campaign" in rebel-controlled areas to candidates for various positions.

That figure is not a rebel boast, but an estimate made by the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Col. Eduardo del Rosario, chief of the Philippine Army's Civil Affairs Group, said the going rate for gubernatorial candidates is P500,000; for congressional candidates, P300,000 to P500,000; and for mayoral candidates, P50,000 to P300,000. Based on the military's "honest estimate" that 10 percent of some 450,000 candidates contesting various positions would come across with P50,000 on the average, Del Rosario said, the NPA could generate a total of P2.25 billion during the campaign period.

It's quite interesting that the AFP puts at 10 percent the number of candidates who would be willing to pay the campaign fees demanded by the NPA. Is it now admitting that the guerrillas control at least 10 percent of the national territory? Or is it exaggerating the threat to get a higher budget?

Apparently the rebels are not about to dispute what to them are very encouraging statistics. In fact, NPA spokesman Gregorio Rosal has seized the AFP announcement as an opportunity to advertise the movement and the services it has to offer. Rosal said the payment of such fees has long been "an election fact of life." "It's the candidate's way of acknowledging the political authority of the revolutionary forces in Red-contolled areas," he explained.

Negotiations between the rebels and some candidates have been going on for months now, Rosal also revealed. And with the 15-day Christmas truce in place, more candidates are expected to inquire about how to secure a permit to campaign. "They will take advantage of the lull in fighting to freely transact business with us," he predicted.

Rosal also said the fees the rebels charge are "open to negotiation." They accept payment in cash or kind, such as communication equipment—a fact that has been confirmed by the Army spokesman. Del Rosario said the guerrillas are willing to accept eight M-16 rifles if a candidate cannot afford to pay P500,000 in cash or four such rifles instead of P300,000.

Apparently such deals have been going on for a long time, as Rosal has said. But what has the government done to stop them? No candidate, winning or losing, has ever been arrested and charged for helping finance the insurgency, which is what paying the fees or giving arms to the rebels amounts to.

Also P2 billion can go a long way in funding the operations of about 10,000 guerrillas. So what is the government doing to check the flow of such a huge sum to the NPA?

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the AFP and the PNP to put together an operational plan to stop the collection of such fees. And she has asked them to work closely with the candidates. In Congress, a bill authored principally by Akbayan Reps. Loretta Ann Rosales and Mario Aguja seeks to criminalize the collection of such campaign fees as well as so-called "revolutionary taxes."

But again the question is: How does one implement the plan or enforce the law? If the government can actually serve warrants of arrest, the rebellion would have been crushed a long time ago.

Rosal has mockingly suggested that the government try to stop "the long line of candidates" who are willing to pay for the privilege of campaigning in the areas controlled by rebels. He did not mean to, of course, but he actually pointed to a more practical way of stopping the rebel exaction. And that is by cracking down hard on candidates who agree to pay or deliver the arms or logistics demanded by the guerrillas.

The candidates are not hostages. They are a party to an illegal transaction. They provide material aid to enemies of the state and abet the rebellion. They should not be treated with sympathy and understanding like victims.

Vice President Legarda or Barbers?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

VICE PRESIDENTIAL timbers Senators Robert Barbers and Loren Legarda were the guests at last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila and if either of them does become vice president of the Philippines, or even president, you won't hear any objection from me. In fact, I think our country would be better off if we have one or both of them at the helm of our government.

Two of our biggest problems are peace and order and the degradation of the environment. These, Barbers and Legarda want to tackle if and when the people elect them to the executive department. Asked what executive positions they would like to be assigned to if they become VP, Barbers said he would like the Department of Interior and Local Government so he can supervise the Philippine National Police; Legarda said she would like the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

As a former police officer—and an outstanding and feared one—Barbers would be in his element supervising the PNP. Asked if he would accept an appointment as chief of the PNP, he said he is already past the retirement age of the police force but that being chief of the DILG would be just as good.

What seems to be wrong with the present PNP so that it seems to be helpless against criminals, especially kidnappers and drug traffickers? Barbers was asked. He replied that the present standards for recruitment, training and discipline are not up to par with the standards when he was still in the police force. Recruitment at present is so lax that potential police characters themselves actually manage to get into the police force. That is why so many ex-cops or AWOL cops often end up on the wrong side of the law.

Legarda's passion, on the other hand, is the environment. If she becomes VP, the preservation of the environment will get the attention it desperately needs. At present, no high-ranking official, neither the President nor the DENR secretary, gives the environment enough priority. The DENR is a split personality: one side is supposed to preserve the environment; the other side involves the exploitation of natural resources. These are opposing functions, so how can one DENR give justice to both?

The present DENR is more concerned with exploitation of the environment (logging, mining, fishing) than in preserving it because there is money in exploiting natural resources but you have to spend money to preserve the environment. That is why beaches, rivers and hills—including the world-famed Chocolate Hills of Bohol which are tourist attractions—are being mined for gravel and sand. There is practically no virgin forest left in the Philippines, but logging, both legal and illegal, continues because there is money, plenty of money, in logging both for the loggers and government officials. No official from the executive or legislative departments has seen that by preserving the forests, there would be more money from tourism.

Will a Vice President Legarda be able to save the environment? So many others have failed before; what makes her different? As I see it, because she is genuinely pro-environment while the others were there only for the fund of it.

Even the city folk can see her pro-environment efforts. The middle island of Buendia Avenue (now Gil Puyat Avenue) is now like a growing mini forest largely through the efforts of Legarda. So are the roadsides of the South Superhighway.

Legarda agreed to connect the vast La Mesa Dam watershed with the pocket Quezon Memorial Park and the Ninoy Aquino Park in Quezon City through a shady sidewalk and biking and jogging lane along Commonwealth Avenue.

Using her pork barrel, she would have a long line of shade trees planted the whole length of Commonwealth between the Quezon Circle and La Mesa Dam. This corner suggested fire trees because they are shady, fast growing and bear beautiful bright-red blossoms. Thus, in summer, we would have two lines of red-crowned trees along the avenue as though it was on fire. They would be planted between the street and the sidewalk so that bikers, joggers and hikers would not only be shaded from the hot sun but will also be protected from passing vehicles.

"Metro Manila, a vast, congested urban area, woefully lacks parks," Legarda said. Of the 13 cities and municipalities that comprise it, only Manila has a big park, the Rizal Park. Quezon City, the biggest in area, has only the pocket Quezon and Aquino parks near city hall. They are only dots compared to the whole area of the capitol city.

The area enclosed by the North, South, East and West Avenues was supposed to be Quezon City's central park, but a succession of presidents subdivided it into enclaves for residential, commercial and government buildings. Only the Quezon and Aquino parks were left.

More tracts of government land that could be turned into parks—such as the Mental Hospital and Welfareville compounds in Mandaluyong, the National Penitentiary in Muntinglupa, Fort Bonifacio in Taguig, and others—have been or will soon be sold to private developers. Instead of the government buying private lands to turn into parks as is being done in the United States, we are selling government lands that can be developed into parks to private developers.

Not only that, what used to be wide open areas north, south and east of Metro Manila are fast being urbanized. Thus, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, and even Batangas are becoming urban areas. In a few more years, we would have a sprawling, congested, and festering megalopolis that would be hell on earth.

Hopefully, we would have a vice president and, later, president Legarda who would be able to stop that.

Quiapo

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

IT is Sunday afternoon. Outside Quiapo Church, on the sidewalks and part of the street itself, a motley crew of men, women and children stand guard over stands that could be packed up at the first hint of trouble. Roots and herbs and plants dot their wares but the thing most prominently displayed on them is a row of bottles proclaiming, "Pangparegla," or "menstruation inducer." It is especially effective, an explanation says, for "1 to 2 months delay." The concoction, or medicine, means to abort pregnancy.

The bottles sit among a slew of other bottles that proclaim "miracle water," "snake oil," "pure oil," and various elixirs, along with rocks and stones of various sizes for pounding laundry and rubbing the body. Religious articles co-exist with the bottles of "Pangparegla"—rosary beads, scapulars, icons of the Sto. Niño and the Virgin Mary, scents, pieces of cloth that had been rubbed on the figures of saints and candles everywhere. Candles of all shapes, sizes and colors, many of them burning brightly in a gray late afternoon on the candle stands, the wax dripping down the candle holders to the pavement. A pool of red has collected below them.

The sellers of "Pangparegla" do not attempt irony, putting the abortive liquids beside icons of the Virgin Mary, nor do they lay puny siege on the fortress of faith with the banners of micro commerce. They are just trying to meet a compelling need. Inside the Church, a priest is intoning, to a swell of echoing voices, "Panginoon, maawa ka." That is the translation of "Lord, have mercy on us" in Tagalog. But here it sounds more like "Lord, have pity on us."

I have just come from Raon—that is one of the names of streets that refuse to die despite having been renamed—a small thoroughfare where people push and shove, cars and vans honk and growl as they crawl through the tangle of flesh and bone and the obstructions that jut out into the street. It's the nearest thing to the Tower of Babel on earth, music or noise blaring out from huge loudspeakers to announce the offerings of various establishments. John Mayer competes with Eddie Peregrina, "Paglisan" competes with "Otso-Otso." A crowd has formed around the stands that sell X-rated VCDs, whose price is subject to haggling. A tall curvaceous girl walks by and the men she passes by turn around to look back.

The shops on the sidewalk on the way to Quiapo Church compete with the stands outside. The stands sell nail clippers, combs, batteries, battery chargers, flashlights, mothballs, knives, playing cards, dice, rat poison. Just past Ma Mon Luk, one of the bigger stands proudly advertises its wares in the form of certificates lying on racks. One of them is framed to show the prospective customer how it would look like hanging on his wall. There are certificates for all occasions: birth certificates, baptismal certificates, marriage certificates and diplomas from different schools. Useful in applying for jobs, especially abroad, or to impress visitors, especially during drinking sprees.

Past Quiapo Church, the Lacson underpass is surprisingly bereft of beggars. There used to be a mainstay at the entrance, a blind and crippled man who played popular tunes on a ragged guitar—never has pop sounded more blues—his guitar amplified by an ancient transistor radio. The underpass now is cleaner and more brightly lit, home to shops selling eyeglasses, cell phones and Christmas décor.

Your senses are assaulted as you burst out through the exit at the other side of the street. The scene looks like an impressionist painting, a blur of slippers, beads, false jewelry, bric-a-brac, cell phone covers, CDs, VCDs, DVDs, corn cobs, peanuts, fish balls, barbecue, toys, people. On the street leading to a bridge, a horde gathers around the stands that have overrun it. The stands are selling Christmas lights, Christmas manger scenes, Christmas reindeer, Christmas chimes, Christmas cheer, Christmas kitsch.

Past the DVD stands, which have tumbled over several streets like a flood, a mosque rises to the sky, its golden crescent standing proudly atop its dome, glinting against the sudden blaze of a dying sun. Across the mosque, eateries line up a small street leading to another bridge, customers sitting side by side on benches, partaking of food drenched in yellow and green and smelling strongly of curry and spice. Someone is grilling fish on a barbecue pit made of soldered tin. Several kids are playing basketball. Dogs lie lazily about, a couple of hens are picking on what is left of a corn cob.

On the sidewalk below the bridge, some women are washing clothes, an old woman is sleeping on a hammock her toothless mouth agape, a man is pedaling a whetstone sharpening a knife, sparks flying in the air. There is no sidewalk left, which squats beside an abandoned building anyway. A structure resembling a nipa hut, made of bamboo and tin from biscuit cans, stands at the far end of the sidewalk, underneath the bridge.

It is life pushing from out of the void, like weeds and flowers from out of the rubble, doggedly, stubbornly, instinctively. It is life growling pugnaciously and hustling its way around, it is life glowing with tolerance, living and let living, the Black Nazarene feasting with the Black Saracen, the whore bedding down with the saint, the priest selling salvation and peddler selling damnation—or the pleasures that go with damnation. It is life pulsating with the excitement of expectation, or the furious alertness of the predator or its prey, its senses stretched taut at the hint of fulfillment or menace, it is life demanding its space amid the push and pull of flesh and metal, demanding to breath amid the overpowering stench of a dead river, it is life wracked by gales of pain and hollow laughter.

It is life in these parts.

A man of many parts

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

BLAS F. Ople began productive life, after the war, as a journalist. He did well as a journalist, first as a deskman on the Daily Mirror, the afternoon paper of the Manila Times publication. Then he went on to write a column called "Jeepney Tales," which depicted life in the raw, and how small people (such as jeepney passengers) lived. Like most journalists, he loved a good drink, and legend was that some times, the Mirror editors would receive calls from the police turning him over to the editors, after finding him nearly half-dead on the road, and probably mistaking him for a tramp.

The police were then solicitous of journalists, and gave them generous allowance for their lapses. After all cops and journalists share a few things in common—they see the world, as the late Arsenio Lacson described it, through the garbage bin—and their occupations were nocturnal. After a binge, Blas would be back on the desk early in time for the 10 a.m. deadline, fresh as a lettuce, with a clear mind, copyreading, editing (or rewriting) reporters' bad grammar, and making their shoddy copy readable.

Already then, Blas had a booming voice, whose volume nearly approached that of the Mirror's managing editor, Manuel Villa-Real, who was the terror of cub reporters, and who respected Blas' talents and his facile pen. I suspect he was really fond of Blas. And reporters whose copy were edited by him were grateful he crafted their stories that made them proud of their bylines.

Journalism soon seemed to be too narrow a world for Blas. His energy and consuming interests in public affairs sought expression in other channels. The ferment of change inspired by the presidency of the dynamic Ramon Magsaysay, drew idealistic young men into public service. Among them was Ople, who was in good company with the Magsaysay Rah-rah boys, such as Rafael Salas.

But Ople, who was born into modest circumstances in Hagonoy, Bulacan, had more links to the disadvantaged and the non-elite class. Earlier on, he was helping the trade union movement. Blas was associated particularly with the federation of the great labor leader, Cipriano Cid, who was then editor of the evening paper, The Evening News. Cid was suspected by the military to be a subversive, for his union activities and because he was a leading member of the Philippine Civil Liberties Union, in the distinguished company of Claro M. Recto and Lorenzo Tañada.

It is probable that Blas' reputation as a leftist and as a nationalist was derived from his association with the trade union movement and nationalists, although Blas had earlier established his credentials as a nationalist with socialist leanings from his own writings. President Ferdinand Marcos was so impressed by Blas' more than skin-deep interest in the working class that he appointed him minister of labor. In the labor ministry, Blas was responsible for drafting the Labor Code that opened opportunities for overseas employment of Filipinos, unable to find jobs at home. Overseas employment was Marcos' way of defusing domestic unrest to ensure regime maintenance.

It was in the labor ministry where Blas gained entry into the world of diplomacy that was to prepare him for the last government post he held—secretary of foreign affairs. The International Labor Organization was his diplomatic training ground and provided him with the international networks through which, pro-labor measures of governments from Marcos' through Cory Aquino's, Fidel Ramos' and Joseph Estrada's, were promoted. Thus, when Blas was appointed foreign secretary by President Macapagal-Arroyo, he was at home in the DFA, one of whose main concerns is looking after the interests of millions of overseas Filipino workers.

The record of Ople on labor is just one aspect of his public life that expanded to politics where he won election as a member of parliament at the Batasan, under Marcos' single party dictatorship. Between that time and the fall of Marcos in 1986, Ople had changed political loyalties. After Marcos he shifted to Aquino, becoming a member of the constitutional commission that drafted the 1987 Freedom Constitution. He was elected for the first time to the Senate in 1992 during the Ramos administration, getting reelected in 1998. In the Senate, Ople has changed his ideological positions—shifts that disappointed his friends and admirers who had considered him as a nationalist and a left of center politician.

Ople sponsored the ratification of the Visiting Forces Agreement, that reopened the way for the joint Philippine-American military exercises after the closure of the US military bases in 1992. This act was considered a watershed of Ople's ideological shift which was further underlined by his support for and implementation of President Macapagal's alignment with President George W. Bush's war on terrorism.

Ople was in the foreign office for only 18 months. He died on the job, in the service of the republic, regardless of the ideological direction of the government in place. As the executor of the President's foreign policy, Ople was in harmony with the source of that policy, providing a contrast with his predecessor, Vice President Teofisto Guingona, who was at loggerheads with his President's policy.

Ople's shifts may be described as opportunism, but a second opinion is that they should be seen as merely a mirror of the shifting tides of Filipino nationalism from the post-independence period to the present where national interests should be interpreted according to the context of the times. If the meaning of Filipino nationalism has not remained static, Ople should be seen as a creature of this shift. In the language of realpolitik, this is pragmatism.

Proverbs

HIGH BLOOD

Raymunda P. Ortega

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

PROVERBS and other common adages have been part of our life for generations. As far back as I can remember, our parents and elders have used appropriate quotes fit for any given situation. They discipline and call the attention of the young ones through examples cited in various proverbs.

A young member of the family may at times be too lazy to get-up-and-go as soon as the sun rises. He is promptly reminded that "It is the early bird that gets the worm." Meaning he would be left behind in this competitive world if he persists in being an idle slowpoke. It also implies that he who is aggressive gets the bigger chance of success materially or otherwise. It is the early bird's diligence and industry that enables him to catch the worm ahead of the other birds who may not be as quick on the take as he.

The proverb clearly refers to "man" as the "early bird." Success in life depends on his intellect, diligence and industry. What about the worm? No one bothers about the "worm." Is it not quite unfair to the worm to be looked upon as nothing but a satisfying meal to the early bird? Can we not expect it to have an iota of intellect to become aware of the danger awaiting it? If it is so gifted with intelligence, then we might as well add to the proverb the words: "It is the wise worm that stays in bed and does not go out till the early bird has left." Then that will be another story.

Another common saying which we often hear is "Haste makes waste." This is similar to our Pilipino adage "*Ang lumalakad ng matulin, kung matinik ay malalim.*" They both admonish us against acting on impulse without weighing the consequences of our actions pro and con.

This, to me, is relative. There are circumstances in life where haste is necessary, as in emergencies where time is of the essence. To dilly-dally in certain situations may mean life and death to those involved in it. Generally, however, careful study of all angles in a particular issue before action is taken and decision is made is a safety device to avoid pitfalls and minimize regrets later on.

An ideal example is one's decision to marry. Among many prospective candidates, both men and women have to consider their ideal choice of a life partner. Whom to marry, when to marry, where to marry and how such a giant step may be taken—all these need detailed consideration before one pushes thru with such a plan. There is another Pilipino saying that refers particularly to marriage, and that is: "*Ang pagaasawa ay hindi kaning isusubo, na maaring ibuga kung mapaso.*" (Marriage is not rice that can be spat out if found too hot.) In the present society we live in, this may no longer be as relevant as in the days of our youth. We now have easily affordable solutions to a hapless, miserable marriage. There is divorce, annulment and/or legal separation that may be resorted to. In these remedies, however, there is the matter of our conscience and our relationship with God that we have to contend with. For it is He who has said: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder!"

Then there is the saying: "Too many cooks spoil the broth." It simply means having too many meddlesome creatures around who try to interfere and influence us with well-meaning and not-so-well-meaning unsolicited advice. It behooves one to carefully analyze which to accept or to reject in order to ensure the "broth" turns out nice to one's taste.

"Better late than never!" makes us aware of the sin of omission. Common among us Filipinos is our "*mañana* habit." We postpone action on unpleasant things; we give all sorts of excuses for not attending to difficult situations at once. We would rather tackle first the nice and easy tasks at hand and relegate for tomorrow those that we consider unnecessary and unimportant. This saying reminds us not to tarry too long, however, for we might end up with: "*Aanhin pa ang damo kung patay na ang kabayo?*" (What do we need grass for if the horse is already dead")

"If at first you don't succeed, try and try again until you do!" Even the unschooled and the young kids among us know and understand this saying. No further explanation is needed. However, discernment is a necessary element to enable us to finally realize that there are some things that God has not meant for us at all, hence, acceptance of failure is just as important as trying again and again. Acceptance of His Will is success in itself! It is what counts the most!

Raymunda P. Ortega, 71, used to work as a court stenographer, RTC Branch 87, Q.C.

Bring 'pasalubong' during Simbang Gabi

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I HOPE it's not too late, now that the Simbang Gabi Masses have begun, but I got this interesting e-mail that shows how Filipino-Americans in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee are seeking to combine Filipino traditions with contemporary Catholic practices in the United States, to come up with creative yet practical ways of helping the less fortunate during this Season.

The Filipino Catholic Ministry, under the Asian Catholic Ministries Office of the Archdiocese, sent out this message to its members:

"Our Simbang Gabi 2003 Masses will incorporate some of our beautiful Filipino cultural patterns, such as the '*pasalubong*' when we visit family and friends. So, in the spirit of the season, we are requesting that you bring one non-perishable food item (each day, if possible) to be donated to the host-parish's food pantry for the needy or for the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, or a "shoebox gift" for Hope House (for the homeless).

"Examples of food items: jelly/peanut butter; flour; canned goods; cereal; oatmeal; macaroni and cheese; white rice; canned soup; ramen soup; pancake mix; crackers; spaghetti and sauce; sugar, etc.

"For the 'shoebox gift': Wrap a shoebox filled with personal hygiene items and mark it for adult female/male, boy/girl/baby. Examples of personal hygiene items: toothbrush, toothpaste, bath soap, deodorant, lavacara (face towel). Other items: socks, gloves, diapers, flannel shirts (new), etc.

"Tip: Include these items in your grocery list; separate these items in another bag; leave it in the trunk of your car so that you won't forget them at home. Also, let your children (make their own) shoebox gift. They will be proud of themselves for helping the needy."

* * *

IT'S heartwarming to realize that even as Filipino-American families have managed to maintain beloved religious traditions like the Simbang Gabi even in the US, they also seek to make this tradition carry meaning beyond nostalgia or mere piety. Instead, they are using the nightly Masses to awaken in their *kababayan* a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate than they, for even in the world's wealthiest nation there are those who fall between the cracks and need a helping hand.

I wonder if there are other parishes and religious groups in the US and here in the Philippines that are using the dawn Masses to mobilize churchgoers in behalf of the less fortunate. The "pasalubong" concept sounds promising. If one is into making sacrifices by getting up at dawn to hear Mass, anyway, one might as well extend the gesture and reach out to those in need, by way of food items or a "shoebox" filled with personal items. A pasalubong, indeed, for the One we are welcoming with these dawn Masses.

This reminds me of a movie shown around this time last year that centered on the "Simbang Gabi" tradition. "Nine Mornings" told the story of a young ambitious man who had to fulfill the Yuletide tradition of hearing all nine dawn Masses if he wanted to inherit everything that his late grandmother had left him. First done as mere obligation and motivated solely by greed, the "duty" and "chore" slowly becomes first, a pleasure for the young man as he meets a lovely young woman and her young ward who are likewise attending the dawn Masses. Then, as the Masses and the young woman's example show him how shallow and meaningless his life was, the young man realizes there is more to life than acquisition and ambition. By the end of the dawn Masses, the young man is shown arriving at, first, repentance, then redemption.

Life is not a movie and it may be hard to believe that life can be turned around just by attending nine Masses. But then, if we imbue the tradition with more meaning and substance, we might yet make a difference in at least one person's life.

* * *

ALSO seeking to make a difference is the Northern Luzon Association of the Disabled or NLAD, founded in 1977 by the late Fr. Herman Gadeyne, CICM.

The NLAD seeks not just to provide for the needs of the disabled, but also to provide them the means to live lives of dignity and self-respect, mainly by providing them gainful employment.

My friend Edna Anton, who since Father Gadeyne's passing has taken over as board chair and president of NLAD, brought us to the NLAD workshop and office in Baguio. Founded in the early 1980s, the workshop employs around 20 workers, nine of whom are disabled. The workshop has been turning out pinewood furniture, with the able-bodied workers responsible for the heavier tasks of planing, sawing and gluing together the various furniture pieces, while the differently-abled are in charge of finishing and painting.

"We used to produce stone craft," said Edna, pointing to décor items made from stone that sit in the back shelves, "but we could not compete with the Cebu-made items and our inventory grew too unwieldy."

The decision to shift to furniture was made, and a source of kiln-dried pinewood, imported from New Zealand, was immediately identified. The NLAD workshop produces both home and office furnishings, including kitchen and novelty items. Edna says her biggest ambition right now is to hit the mainstream market by being carried by "Our Home," a furniture and home accessories store owned and managed by the Sys of Shoemart fame. Not only will being carried by "Our Home" mean gaining a foothold in the market, says Edna, it will also prove that their furniture are on par with those produced by commercial manufacturers. And judging from the final products, the NLAD furniture can indeed compete with the best of them.

* * *

MOST of the furniture in the outlets of "Sizzling Plate," four in Baguio alone, and in the other food outlets now owned and managed by the Anton children, are sourced from the NLAD workshop.

For the newest "Sizzling Plate" in SM Baguio, Edna and Mike's daughter said she wanted a "less boring" design and so instead of the straight-backed plain pinewood chairs in the other outlets, the new place boasts of chairs with a curved back painted a bright orange.

It was a challenge the workers at the NLAD easily met and it seems there is little that can daunt them, their disabilities notwithstanding.

Things that don't change, or change little

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

THERE is a certain stability and security that comes with things that do not change—or change very little. We all need something to look back or go home to every now and then. Last week I found myself in San Fernando, Pampanga and just had to dine at Everybody's Café on what I remember was MacArthur Hi-way. Ever since the North Luzon Expressway was built, bypassing the town proper, some effort was required to go into San Fernando and visit one of two outlets of Everybody's Café whose food and prices are definitely not for everybody. "Safe" Filipino food like longanisa, tocino, paksiw, adobo, chicharon bulaklak, chicharon with or without laman (meat), halo-halo, leche flan etc. are always available.

Then there are the more esoteric offerings like; fried mole crickets or *kamaru* and the best *pindang damulag* or cured carabao beef I have ever tasted. This literally melts in your mouth and while you can order the uncooked *pindang damulag* to take home they will not teach you how to cook it and get the same effect. Thus, one has to dine there or at least buy cooked portions.

In the days before Thailand dumped surplus rice on us, Everybody's Café was the place for the small-grain, fragrant, *milagrosa* variety. Since we had this all the time from childhood I never understood why visitors to our home or the home of my grandparents would ooh and aah over what turned out to be a rare and expensive variety. Well, the *milagrosa* mystique is no more, not that it has become extinct, rather it has become common. I was surprised to find "*milagrosa*" in a Filipino store in the US recently and wondered how this even got exported. I was dismayed to discover that Thailand now exports rice labeled "*milagrosa*." Anyway, the steaming rice served in Everybody's Café is still the real *milagrosa* from Central Luzon that blends very well with home-made *morcon*. The *morcon* drippings are served separately on request to complete the cholesterol fix suicidal diners like me crave for. Often warned about the dangers of over-eating, blood sugar and cholesterol levels my standard Kapampangan reply is that I would rather die than diet. Besides, dieting won't keep me from dying right?

Not content with our nostalgic Everybody's Café meal, take-out was requested and when we arrived in Manila I eagerly opened the bag of goodies and found two other relics from my childhood *uraro* and *Saniculas*. The former are white arrowroot cookies, the ones that come in the shape of a flower, supposedly sampaguita, stacked and wrapped in wax paper, the latter are larger, golden, shaped like a leaf and had embossed on it the image of St. Nicolas de Tolentino hence its name *Saniculas*. While one can find *uraro* in places other than Pampanga—the ones from Laguna look the same but don't taste the same—*Saniculas* is baked in Pampanga or by Kapampangans and distributed over Central Luzon. *Saniculas* are supposed to be medicinal. My grandmother seemed to consider the cookies a few notches below the white wafer given out at Mass and reminded me to pray reverently before I bit into these cookies. Naturally, I don't remember the prayer more concerned was I about the eating than the praying.

Over the years I have been scavenging in antique shops searching for Saniculas moulds. These pieces of native hardwood on which was carved the image of the saint and assorted floral designs are quite difficult to find and much coveted by collectors. I was lucky to have been gifted with a handful by the late Elvira Manahan whose kitchen was adorned with these cookie moulds. The saint is depicted wearing an Augustinian habit, one hand holding what appears to be a plate with a bird. Some people presume, wrongly of course, that San Nicolas de Tolentino is the origin of the fat bearded man in a red suit we know as Santa Claus. If only to explain the *Saniculas* cookies to my nieces I had to open my lives of the saints to discover that there are more than two saints named Nicolas but for the purpose of this column we will stick to San Nicolas de Tolentino, who is venerated in some parts of the Philippines founded or under the administration of the Augustinians and Recollects, and San Nicolas de Bari, a 4th century bishop of Myra, who is the original Santa Claus.

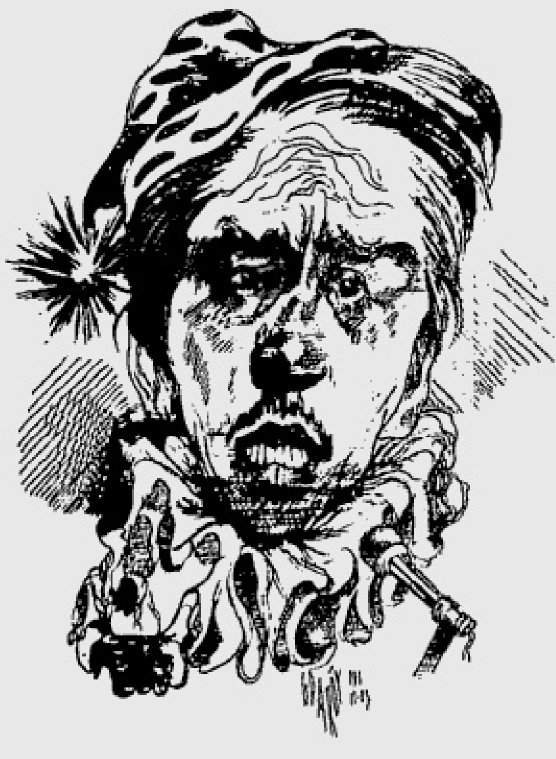
Dec. 6 is the feast of St. Nicolas of Bari of whom very little is known, thus in the absence of much solid biographical information the gap is filled in with legend. Naturally, the legends are more attractive than the real story now lost to history. We are told that Nicolas' parents left him a fortune that he decided to spend on charitable causes. He heard about a man in Patara who lost all his money and couldn't pay the dowry for his three unmarried daughters. So the next best thing was to sell them off into prostitution. One night Nicolas threw a small bag of gold coins into the man's house and the money was not squandered but used for the first daughter's dowry. Nicolas later threw in a second and third bag of coins into the man's house to save all the girls from prostitution or becoming spinsters. In art St. Nicolas is depicted holding three balls or three bags that should remind the faithful of this legend, but as it turns out led to another legend.

Conclusion on Friday

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

IN THE NEWS



Sen. Vicente Sotto III

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GMA's moral ambivalence

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THE PRESIDENT'S latest political stunt confirms what people knew all along: she's a consummate politician who has no qualms about sacrificing moral integrity on the altar of pragmatism.

Fourteen days earlier, President Macapagal-Arroyo reaffirmed the decision she made in September 2002 that she would not execute death row inmates. Recognizing the dubious claim of capital punishment to deterrence, she stressed that what is needed is a strengthening of our law-enforcement agencies. Apparently, the President is not totally convinced about what she had said because she changed her mind suddenly on the moratorium of the death penalty. She wants to resume executions. Talk about *palabra de honor*.

The President may find it difficult to defend her revised stand on the death penalty as selective execution of kidnappers is discriminatory against poor victims of other heinous crimes. Apparently, the change in policy came about because of the pressure from the Chinese business leaders whose support for the elections is no doubt being courted by the President. The poor do not have the same economic leverage as the wealthy Chinese businessmen. One wonders if the President would make the same policy turnaround in their favor given the fact that the poor have nothing to offer to the economy.

Once again, moral consistency yielded to political expediency. Now there's one big reason why one should not vote for her.

—FR. SILVINO BORRES JR., S.J.,
Coalition Against Death Penalty,
c/o CBCP Episcopal Commission on
Prison Pastoral Care,
470 General Luna St.,
Intramuros, Manila

Made into losers twice over

WE have long admired Rina Jimenez-David's determined advocacy of women's rights. But in her columns of Nov. 26, 27, 27 and 30, we saw how zealousness can translate into a cruel tool in besmirching the reputation and integrity of an accused and other people never involved in the incident David was referring to. It would have been fair if objectivity made her look deeper into the case as there are always at least two sides to a coin.

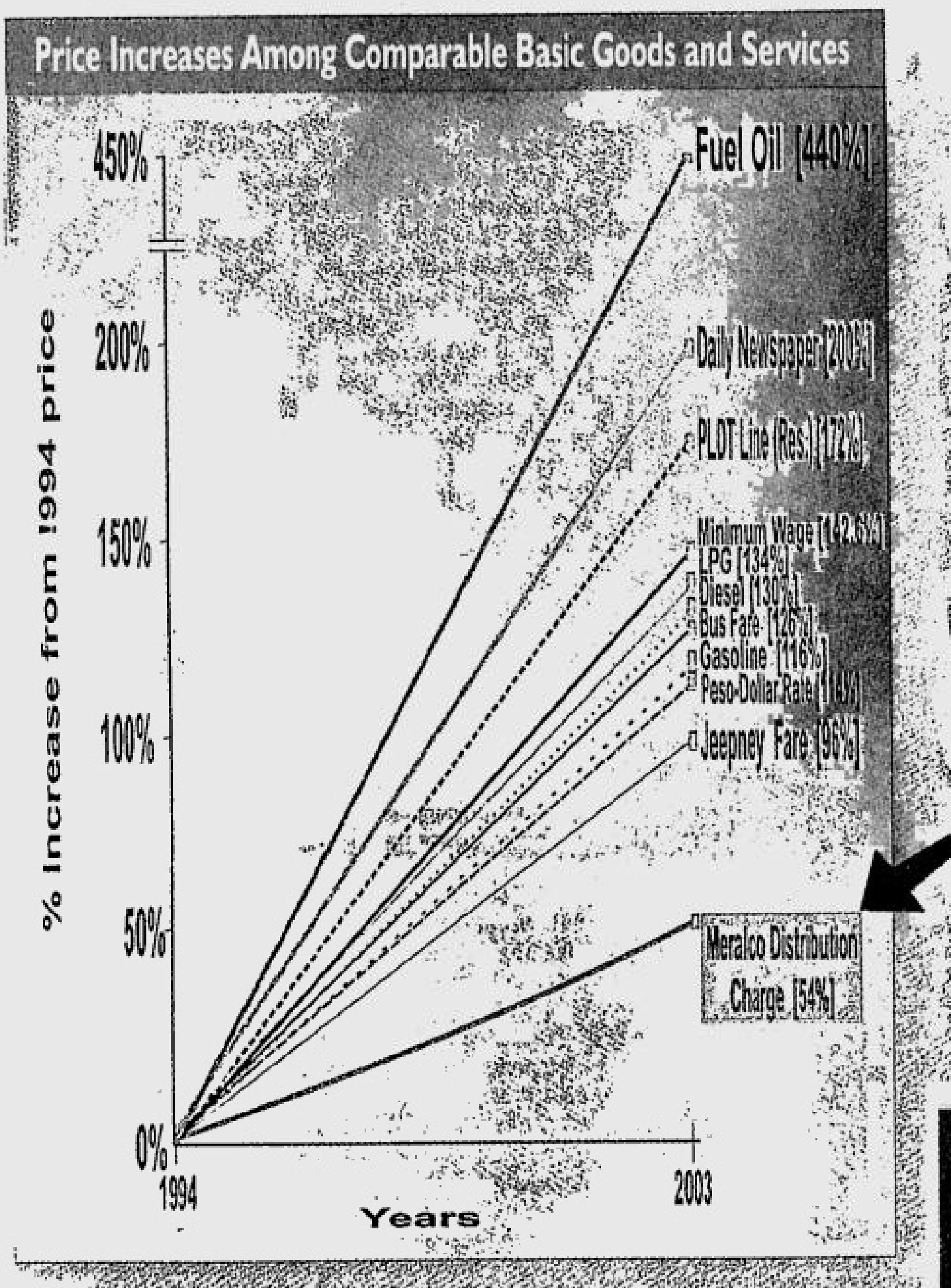
The incident that David exposed in her column is an open and old story that has dragged on at the PGH Medical Center. It is a wonder why she is writing about it only now. It is an isolated case and sexual harassment has never been part of the "culture" of the PGH or the Department of Orthopedics in the manner that David has portrayed it. There has been no coverup of the case. The director of the PGH and the dean of the UP College of Medicine acted swiftly by summoning and investigating all parties concerned when this happened 18 months ago. At least three investigating committees (one each from the College of Medicine, the University Hospital and the UP Manila Chapter respectively) have been created to look into the matter. The recommendations of these investigating committees finally culminated in an administrative case against the accused after all due process was carried out. The case has been tried by a University Tribunal consisting of members who were approved by the lawyers of the respondent and the complainant. Hearings recently ended and UP Manila is waiting for the final verdict, which will be submitted to the president of the UP System. This tribunal is not a court of law and we cannot accuse David of speaking *sub judice*. It is clear however that her lopsided reporting is designed to sway sentiments because why would David write so extensively demeaning the UP College of Medicine, the Philippine General Hospital and the Department of Orthopedics. At least, she should respect the basic right of the accused to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

David has unjustly pictured the Department of Orthopedics as a hotbed of "machismo." It is true that the department is male-dominated but this is true around the world where orthopedics is concerned, in the same way that the fields of obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics and even dermatology are dominated by women physicians. The brand that David has stamped on the Department of Orthopedics is grossly unfair, if not malicious. The faculty of the department does not condone such practices.

The case that David exposed in her article is an unfortunate incident. The officials of UP Manila, PGH and UP College of Medicine do not want anything less than the truth behind this case. David's columns has already prejudged the accused and the department to which he belongs. It might interest the public to know the story of the accused. For now, we must keep faith in the university's justice process and trust in the fairness of the members of the tribunal. Wanton and biased reporting of the case only achieved one thing—making both the accuser and the accused losers twice over.

—RAFAEL CRUZ BUNDOC, MD FPOA,
associate professor, Department of
Orthopedics, UP College of Medicine,
PGH Medical Center, Manila

Understanding Meralco's 12-centavo Adjustment



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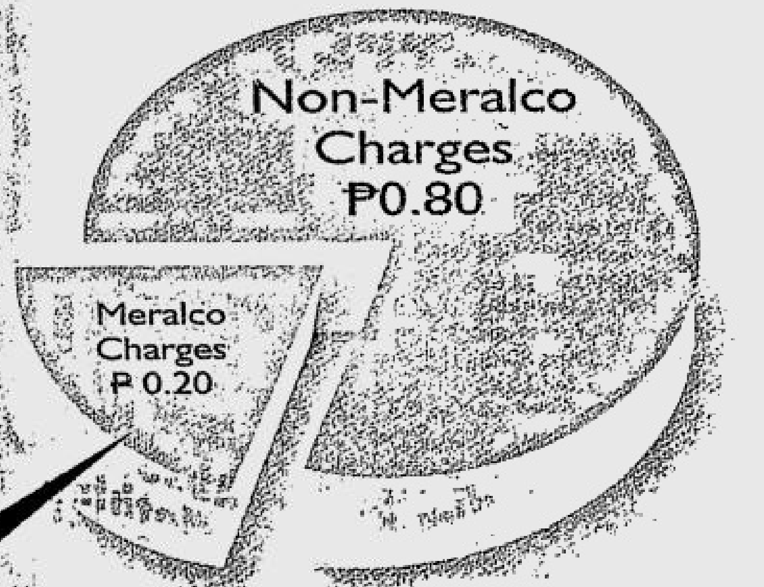

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Meralco is keenly aware of the role that a reliable power distributor plays in support of the economy, attracting investments and thus creating jobs for our people. This is a proven commitment manifested over 100 years of dedicated service to the Filipino nation.

We seek your understanding and support for the rate adjustment of P0.12 per kwh.

"Meralco is keenly aware of the role that a reliable power distributor plays in support of the economy, attracting investments and thus creating jobs for our people."

-Manuel M. Lopez
Chairman & CEO

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'False and malicious'

ONE of the problems of Philippine democracy is that writers who should be dedicated to truth propagate lies. Mr. Mon Tulfo is one such example. His story about my being a wife beater is false, totally baseless and malicious. He even admits he doesn't know me or my wife yet he continues to bear false witness against his neighbor. It is against God's and man's law. Shame on Tulfo.

—RAUL ROCO, 16/F Strata 2000 Bldg.,
Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Never hurt physically

ALLOW me to put things straight. Tulfo lies without basis when he says, "Raul is a wife beater." I am happily married and I must say that respect with self-respect and kindness, are core values we practice toward each other as equal partners. For 36 years, together, we raised six happy and healthy children who have given us four charming grandchildren.

Tulfo admits he doesn't know us at all. May I tell him straight to his face the truth that Raul Roco has never hurt me physically during our whole relationship. That Tulfo relies on gossips he has heard and publishes it is most unjust and irresponsible. If he is a gentleman at all, he must withdraw his statements and apologize for hurting the feelings of our family and for eroding the respect of our friends.

—SONIA M. ROCO,
Quezon City

Ople's lasting legacy

WHAT is Blas Fajardo Ople's chief legacy to the nation? His No. 1 legacy is the overseas employment program, which earns US$8 billion a year. Under globalization, the country's overseas employment industry is the nation's single biggest employer and money maker.

Before Ople made overseas employment a major activity beginning in 1974, we were supplying manpower mainly to United States offshore military installations in Okinawa, Guam, Diego Garcia, Vietnam and Taiwan. Starting with the deployment of 34 construction workers in Saudi Arabia in 1974, brought there by Engineering Equipment Inc., we now have more than 8 million workers in more than 150 countries.

The large-scale deployment of Filipino workers overseas was originally opposed by President Ferdinand Marcos. It would mean massive brain drain at a time when Marcos, inspired by the example of South Korea's Park Chung Hee, was beginning to tinker with his 11 major industrial projects. Instead of sending workers abroad, Marcos said, they should be prepared to man the country's industrial revolution.

How did Ople overcome these objections? In one memorandum to Marcos after another, Ople said the massive deployment of Filipino workers overseas would be the fastest and cheapest way of preparing them, through on-the-job technology transfer, to man the major industrial projects. Another powerful argument used by Ople: Overseas workers are among the most energetic and ambitious Filipinos. Unless gainfully employed here or abroad, they are likely to gravitate into the New People's Army which was then engaged in hectic muscle development.

These arguments softened Marcos' resistance and soon, with the establishment of the Overseas Employment Development Board and the National Seamen Board (now merged into the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration) under the Labor Code of the Philippines (another Ople legacy), overseas employment obtained Marcos' blessings. Sabotaged by the technocrats in his regime, Marcos' 11 major industrial projects were vetoed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, thus Ople's overseas employment program developed its own momentum.

Today, the country's overseas employment program is the anchor of the national economy.

I worked with Blas F. Ople without interruption from 1957 to 1980. We parted ways due to honest divergence of views on Philippine-American relations and on globalization.

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Gov says people's support for communist rebs waning

By Romy Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz claimed that the support of the people in the mountains of Negros Oriental to the New People's Army (NPA) is waning.

Arnaiz said the masses were tired of helping the insurgents fight the government and had realized that the government was sincere in trying to help them improve their plight.

He said that in some former rebel strongholds, the residents were requesting that a military detachment be put up in their area.

The governor cited the case of Barangay Talalak, Sta. Catalina town, about 90 kilometers south of here.

He said Talalak residents wanted to have a military presence in their village so they would not be disturbed by communist rebels.

Talalak and its neighboring villages used to be controlled by the insurgents in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Info exec tells Corpus: Gov't run by ex-Reds

BAGUIO CITY—Officials of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) reminded former military intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus that reformed activists and former communists have been running the government for the past three years.

Corpus, commander of the Armed Forces of the Philippines' civil relations group, told reporters last week that PIA has been overrun by communists, who are members of the Confederation for Unity, Respect and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage).

Helen Tibaldo, PIA Cordillera director, said Corpus' statements maligned officials whose history of militancy had helped steer the administrations of President Macapagal-Arroyo and even of jailed former President Joseph Estrada.

Tibaldo referred to former newsman and now presidential chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao, a survivor of the First Quarter Storm.

Former Press Secretary Hernani Braganza, now Ms Macapagal's political affairs adviser, was the regional chair of the Mag-aaral at Kabataan para sa Kalayaan ng Bayan (Makabayan) in 1984 and national chair of the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP) from 1983 to 1984.

Estrada's former agrarian reform secretary, Horacio Morales, once led the National Democratic Front.

Courage has also been actively recruiting police and military personnel to help campaign for higher wages in that field, said Jeanette Ribaya, Cordillera coordinator for Courage.

She laughed off Corpus' "communist" tag of Courage, saying the militant group had been organizing government employees to strengthen their labor rights.

"The government is trying to threaten the employees (who have been seeking higher state wages for years). That is their way. If they cannot give in to employees' demands, they scare the employees off," Ribaya said.

But Tibaldo acknowledged that recent military intelligence briefings identified Courage in its watch list for the year.

"I am furious. Corpus must name names if he feels PIA has to police its ranks. But since it is the military, which briefs us about current developments in government, they should have confronted us directors with solid evidence," she said.

The PIA employees association here, however, said they have been supportive of all Courage resolutions. *Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Pact eyed to save RP spotted deer

DUMAGUETE CITY—The two Negros provinces have agreed to join hands in protecting and preserving their wildlife especially the endangered spotted deer (*Cervus alfredi*).

Negros Oriental Vice Gov. Jose Baldado, dubbed as the province's wildlife czar, said he and other officials met with their counterpart in Negros Occidental last week.

During the meeting, it was agreed that the two provinces would work together to ensure the protection and preservation of the wildlife found or moving around in the boundaries.

He said they would focus on the spotted deer, which can be found in the mountain boundaries of Hinobaan and Candoni towns of Negros Occidental and Basay town in Negros Oriental.

Felina Tiempo, coordinator of the captive breeding program of spotted deer at Silliman University's A.Y. Reyes Botanical and Zoological Garden, said the spotted deer is considered as a national treasure because it is found only in the Philippines.

Baldado said lawyer Jose Valencia, who represented Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Maranon during their meeting in Bacolod City last week, agreed that officials of the two provinces would meet again early next year to formalize their alliance on the matter.

Baldado said he would propose the signing of a memorandum of agreement between the two provinces of Negros on the protection of the wildlife.

His vision, he said, was for the two provinces to pool their resources to attain their common objective of preserving their wildlife, which has been under extreme pressure due to environmental destruction.

Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Leyte solon questions travel of graft accused

SOUTHERN Leyte Rep. Aniceto Saludo yesterday demanded an investigation of how an accused in 83 graft cases involving P2 billion is able to get in and out of the country freely.

In a statement, Saludo said the accused is involved in a multibillion-peso tax credit scam that benefited the country's oil companies.

"What's going on here?" Saludo said in his statement.

The accused, he said, was able to get in and out of the country despite the filing of the graft cases against him.

The cases have been filed at the Sandiganbayan and are now pending at the anti-graft court's fourth division.

Saludo said he was questioning why there has been no hold departure order against the accused despite the 83 graft cases that he faces.

He said the accused is a holder of three passports and withheld this information from the anti-graft court.

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Immigration men round up 9 Chinese in Bacolod

BACOLOD CITY—Operatives of the Intelligence Division of the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation from Manila, assisted by Bacolod policemen, arrested here on Monday nine Chinese nationals suspected to be working in this city without permits.

Bacolod alien control officer Mita Chuvy Arguelles said the arrests were made after local businessmen complained that some of the establishments in Bacolod City were owned by illegal aliens.

The nine were apprehended by virtue of Mission Order ADD 03-377 issued by Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo, but the BID did not specify the stores in Bacolod City where they were arrested.

They were brought to Manila yesterday to allow immigration authorities to check the authenticity of their documents and find out if they have been allowed to legally stay in the Philippines, Arguelles said.

Arguelles said those arrested were only identified as Wang Ta Gu, Shi Weng Ling, Shen Fen Bei, Lin Qian Tao alias Tomas, Shu Zhi Hua alias Zhen Fa Wu, Zhang Gou Kuan, Fufu Tang, Wu Lai Wing and Wu Zoe alias Joe Wo.

She said the arrests were done with the assistance of elements from this city's police precinct 1 headed by Chief Insp. Roderick Alba. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Aetas camp out vs Army presence

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Aetas fleeing the alleged militarization of two villages at the Pampanga-Zambales border started camping out at the provincial capitol grounds here on Monday.

Some 30 families who fled Barangay Kamias in Porac town on Wednesday set up camp at 8 a.m., the expected arrival of Gov. Manuel Lapid at the capitol.

Left word

However, Lapid did not report for work on Monday but left word he would meet with Central Luzon Aeta Association (CLAA) leaders on Thursday.

The governor has not banned protest actions at the capitol grounds.

Camp-out

The camp-out came a week after President Macapagal-Arroyo declared the suspension of offensive military operations.

Nelson Mallari, CLAA chair, said 200 Aeta families were expected to join the camp-out. The first batch brought with them food, including sacks of sweet potatoes and radish.

Mallari and leaders of the farmers' group Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon and the party-list group Anak Pawis said they would not dismantle the camp until the demands of the Aetas for the pullout of government troops and the removal of military detachments in the villages were acted upon.

Investigation

They also demanded an investigation of alleged human right violations by soldiers.

In separate interviews, Col. Herbert Yambing and Col. Domingo Tutaan, commanders of the Army's 69th and 24th infantry battalions, denied the allegations of human rights abuses.

Aeta's plight

Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, chief of the Army's Northern Luzon Command, said he had ordered Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, commander of the 7th Infantry Division, to investigate the Aetas' plight.

Mallari said the camp-out at the capitol grounds was staged on the heels of inaction by the government, mainly by the regional Commission on Human Rights. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Ex-NPA slain in ambush by communist guerrillas

DUMAGUETE CITY—A member of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) was killed and two of his comrades were wounded yesterday when suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) ambushed them in Sitio Kakha, Barangay Talalak, Sta. Catalina, a town about 85 km south of here.

The ambush took place two weeks after government soldiers clashed with a group of suspected NPAs in the villages of Mantikil and Apoloy in Siaton town, some 50 km south of here.

In that encounter, a government soldier was wounded but the military said several rebels were killed.

Senior Supt. Amaron Morrok, the Negros Oriental police director, said a group of RPA-ABB members were on patrol when waylaid by the suspected NPAs reportedly led by former RPA-ABB cadre Raul Villar alias Ka Drilon at around 5 a.m. yesterday.

The identities of the slain RPP-ABB member and his wounded companions were not yet available.

Morrok said he instructed the police mobile unit in Sta. Catalina to organize a team that would pursue the NPA guerrillas.

The RPA-ABB, which broke away from the NPA over ideological differences in the mid-1990s, has been coordinating its activities with government troops after it entered into a peace agreement with the government.

It was not known whether the RPA-ABB cadres were with government forces when the ambush took place. *Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Gay wedding sends alarm bells ringing in Church

BAGUIO CITY—The recent wedding of a gay couple in a clandestine ceremony here has alarmed Catholic bishops who have outlined pastoral guidelines on heterosexual and homosexual misconduct in the clergy.

"The wedding of gay couples is alarming because marriage, in all its fundamental sense, is between a man and a woman," said Baguio-Benguet Bishop Carlito Cenzon.

Cenzon said he and other Catholic bishops wanted to get information on gay marriages and the people involved in solemnizing such unions.

He said the members of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), in their plenary assembly in January in Tagaytay City, are expected to raise questions on same-sex marriages, especially the one held in Baguio City in November.

The wedding between two gay men here was officiated by Fr. Richard Mickley, the superior of the Order of St. Aelred. Mickley said he had officiated more than 100 weddings of gay and lesbian couples in the past seven years in the country.

His group provides a support system for gays and lesbians who, he said, are often discriminated against.

Cenzon said the Catholic Church remains firm in its religious mandate not to bless same sex unions.

Cenzon said CBCP officials summoned him to Manila after the story on the gay couple's marriage appeared in the INQUIRER last month. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

Higher fees to Apo

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) is instituting measures to regulate the number of visitors to the Apo Island, an internationally renowned scuba diving spot, after studies showed that some corals were damaged due to intense scuba diving activities. Chamberlain Babiera, protected area superintendent on the island, said the PAMB passed a resolution seeking to increase access fees to Apo Island to restrict the entry of visitors and the use of resources to protect and preserve the island in Dauin, Negros Oriental. He said the entrance fee will be increased from P30 to P100 for foreigners; P10 to P30 for locals; and from P5 to P10 for students and residents of Dauin town. Other fees for scuba diving, snorkeling, camping and docking would also be increased by 100 percent or more, he added.

Romy Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Bulacan trader killed

BALIUAG, Bulacan—A businesswoman was killed while her Chinese-Filipino husband was wounded when two motorcycle-riding men shot them on J.P. Rizal Street here on Friday night. Police said Mylene Cai, 30, died of a bullet wound in her head. Her husband, Reymond Cai, 38, suffered from bullet wounds in the shoulder and chest and was taken to a hospital in Metro Manila. Police said the suspects blocked the couple's car and fired at them. The couple was engaged in the construction and lumber supply business in Bustos town.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Santiago; 50

VIRGILIA Santiago, a former Makati elementary school teacher from Obando, Bulacan, died yesterday of bone cancer. She is survived by parents Martin and Felisa; siblings and in-laws Pining, Nelio and Carrie, Nestor and Dada, Leo and Ghie, Tom and Mila, Nic, Elmee and Roger and Tita and Bobby. Her remains lie at the Santiago residence in Paliwas, Obando, Bulacan. Interment will be announced later.

Project needs P62M

BAGUIO CITY—The National Economic and Development Authority has endorsed Apayao as a priority pilot area of the government's "Telepono sa Barangay" program. The implementation of the program, which aims to connect the region's remote areas through a public telephone system, has been delayed due to lack of funding, Neda officials said. The Department of Transportation and Communications said the government needs P62 million to implement the project. Ely Aguila, DOTC's Telepono sa Barangay project manager, said the foreign fund component for the project, in the form of communications equipment and infrastructure, has been delivered. Only the P500-million counterpart fund from the Philippine government is needed to fully implement the project, Aguila said. *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Bludgeoned to death

CITY OF MALOLOS—An 80-year-old widow was bludgeoned to death by men who broke into her grandson's house at a subdivision here on Friday. The body of Enriquita Recio-Cortez was found inside the toilet. Police said Cortez's head was struck with a hard object. Missing from the house were P300,000 worth of jewelry and a .45 cal. pistol owned by her grandson, Joneel de Guzman. De Guzman, a former overseas contract worker, and his wife were out of the house when the crime happened, police said.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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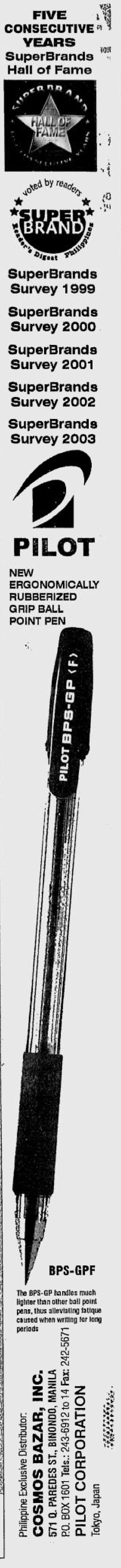
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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Burnt innocence in Baguio club fire

EIGHT persons died in a fire that hit a club in Baguio City last week.
TOOTS SOBERANO

By Frank Cimatu
Baguio City

THE SEVEN members of the M & M International Dancers came to Baguio City to find jobs. Unlike thousands of other young men and women who came to this resort city, they were not armed with a college diploma. All of them were high school dropouts. But unlike their peers, they immediately found a job.

Qualifications for nightclub dancers are youth, beauty and guts and there are 45 nightclubs and other establishments in the city ready to accommodate them.

The M & M dancers were first hired in a nightclub on Legarda Road but they only stayed for two days because they had no place to sleep there. Someone told them about a nightclub beside a fastfood chain on Magsaysay Avenue.

Perutz is located in the basement of the Tenefrancia Building (the entrance is the only thing visible on the road). Many people didn't even know it existed because sidewalk vendors blocked the club's door during the day. Only at night did Perutz come alive.

Their cramped quarters in Perutz also served as dressing room. There was a huge bed and because the seven had to share the room with a floor manager, two had to sleep on the floor. Their quarters could be reached through a narrow passageway, which is better described as a tunnel, where the dancers had to pass single-file.

The M & M dancers kept to themselves during their first week, not yet mingling with the so-called "house models." The M & M were introduced as Jada, Monica, Mayumi, Josie, Avril and Kaycee, while their manager was Edcel. Their assistant and wardrobe manager was Nene. Their handler or floor manager in the club was 26-year-old Marvin Paraiso.

Liking Baguio

They were paid P400 nightly, excluding tips from ladies' drinks. After participating in a Dec. 7 parade for the World AIDS Day commemoration on Session Road, the M & M dancers decided to tour the city. Their manager even posed riding a pony at Mines View Park. They were beginning to like Baguio even if they found it very cold.

On the morning of Dec. 10, one of them decided to go to Manila. They all accompanied her to the bus terminal. On that night, they were beginning to laugh with the house models. Business was picking up. One even confided that she could finally send money back home.

Perutz closed at 4 a.m. on Dec. 11 but the M & M dancers slept at 7 a.m. At least three of them were drunk because they were given too much to drink in one of the club's VIP rooms, their co-workers said.

At 10:45 a.m., fire broke out in one of the VIP rooms. Only the seats and the walls were burned but the smoke was too thick that Perutz's interior is now coated with thick soot. The smoke was enough to kill the eight people inside the quarters while they were sleeping.

"They looked like they were sleeping," said Josie Concepcion, 22, the only surviving member of the M & M.

It was Concepcion who identified the dead. Jada is Mila Modequillo from Cebu; Mayumi is Maricel Gajudo from San Carlos City in Pangasinan; Monica is Josie Alagos, 18, from Antique; Kaycee is Cherry Fajardo Bihasa from Aurora; Avril is Janice Florencio from Davao; and the wardrobe assistant is Liezl Tejada, 20, from Caloocan City. Only Edcel remained unidentified.

Concepcion said some of the victims' relatives were unaware that their loved ones used to dance on stage for a living.

That the dancers consider theirs as "jobs" is part of a debate during the First National Conference of Women Victims-Survivors of Prostitution in October at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

"Prostitution is a big part of the tourism infrastructure and there is a 'consented' approval of the local government for the fronts for prostitution," said Aida Santos of the Women's Empowerment and Development Productivity and Research Organization (Wed Pro).

"The continuing maintenance of the social hygiene clinic and the issuance of 'pink cards' to the women to prove that they are 'clean' and without STD (sexually transmitted diseases) are examples of the government's acceptance and support of prostitution," she said.

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Soft drink firm taps recycling for Xmas decors

EVEN THE celebration of Christmas must be economically and environmentally relevant these days.

At the Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPI) plant in Calasiao, Pangasinan, employees were challenged to come up with Christmas decorations using waste materials from plant products like bottles, caps, cans, signage and billboards, awnings, cartons and others.

Rey Ortaleza, CCBPI area human resources specialist, said the plant management came up with the idea of creating decors out of waste materials because "we wanted to celebrate Christmas in an inexpensive way and at the same time tap the creativity of the employees."

"In a way, it's a cost-cutting measure. We are also doing this to support the solid waste management program of the company," he said.

Vic Caducio, manufacturing manager of the plant and the head of the management committee, said 21 entries were submitted by groups of employees from the plant's seven departments.

Among the decors made out of scraps was a giant figure of Santa Claus. The figure's body was made from the all too familiar red plastic label of a liter Coke bottle and a moustache of "polishing filter (rope)." Of course, in his hand is a can of Coke.

Also among the entries was a nativity scene: the manger was made of cans stocked one on top of another, the bodies of Joseph and Mary were made of bottles and their heads, of caps; and the camels and sheep were cut out from cans.

There were stars of all sizes beautifully crafted with cans and more cans, a Christmas tree cut out of the green Sprite plastic bottles, and a Snowman with a body of used foam with eyes and nose of crowns. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes*

JEEP HANGERS-ON

MMDA: Get them off running boards

By Margaux Ortiz

YOU CAN see them everywhere, especially during rush hours—commuters hanging on for dear life on the running boards of jeepneys.

But the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is bent on discouraging this annoying habit of commuters who wish to get to their destinations posthaste.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday warned public utility drivers not to let these "hangers-on" cling to rails outside their jeepneys.

He said jeepney drivers caught taking on excess passengers would face corresponding penalties.

"The habit has long been banned, but many commuters continue to do this, especially during rush hours when there is a shortage of vehicles," Fernando said.

He also said that some "hangers-on" also serve as "covers" for jeepney robbers who prey on passengers.

Fernando explained that with the entryway of the jeepney blocked, it would be hard for anyone to peer inside, making it easier for culprits to rob their victims.

"We still have no sanctions for the actual commuters who choose to hang on at the rear end of jeepneys," Fernando said. "It will be the drivers' responsibility to keep them off their vehicles."

MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said they have already instructed their traffic enforcers to be on the lookout for hardheaded drivers and commuters.

METROBRIEFS

MMDA man slain

REYNALDO R. Sanchez of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority was stabbed to death by unidentified men in Baclaran, Parañaque City on Monday night. The killers used a sickle to stab Sanchez, 24, of Balut, Tondo, Manila at 7:15 p.m. Police said Sanchez, a member of the sidewalk clearing operations team, was wearing his blue MMDA uniform when he went to the corner of G.G. Cruz and Bayani, looking for a store to buy food. *Margaux Ortiz*

Cyclist hit by truck

ROMEO Sadiwa of Navotas yesterday was riding his bicycle along Road 10, near the Makro warehouse, in Manila when he was hit by a trailer truck. SP03 Rogelio Frias said that when the unidentified driver stepped on the brakes at around 7:30 a.m., the truck's rear portion swerved and hit Sadiwa, 60, who fell under the wheels. He died on the spot. The truck driver managed to escape. But Frias said that the police have already identified the truck's owner, a resident of El Cano Street in Binondo. *Leila Salaverria*

No discounts in jail

J01 FRANCISCO Villar Jr., 29, of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and Alejandro Montelibano, Jr., 23, of the Philippine Air Force, yesterday morning found themselves behind bars for pistol-whipping Danilo Amado and Elsie Besandre, manager and waitress of the West Leyte Disco on Evangelista Street, Barangay Santolan, Pasig City. The police also arrested a third suspect, Angelo Ranon, 27. Police said the suspects got upset when Amado failed to give them a decent discount for the beer they consumed. *Luige del Puerto*

2 teachers hurt

TWO SCHOOL teachers on Monday night suffered minor burns when they attended Midnight Mass in Caloocan City. The two were hearing mass at the Historical Walk in the Bonifacio Monument Circle when organizers lit fireworks to entertain the people. But the victims—both teachers from the Valenzuela City High School—were hit by sparks and had to be treated for burns on their thighs, said SPO4 Generoso Pineda. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

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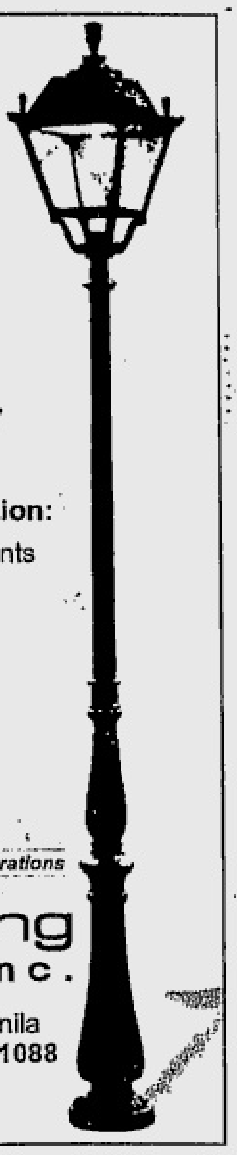

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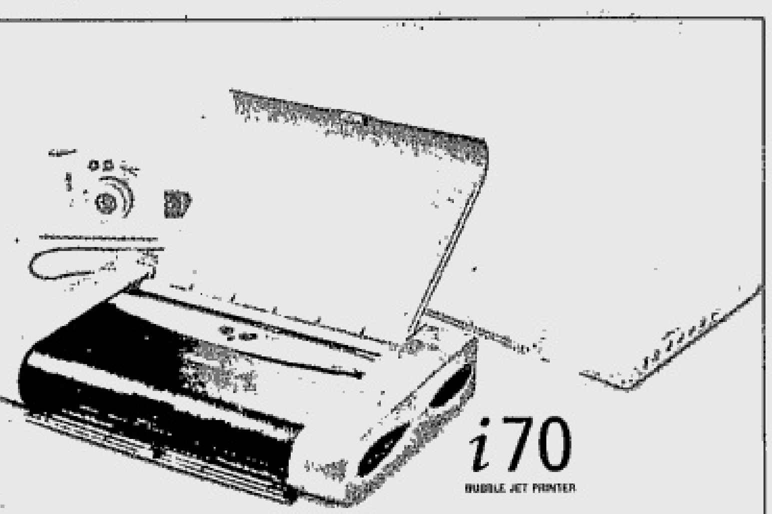

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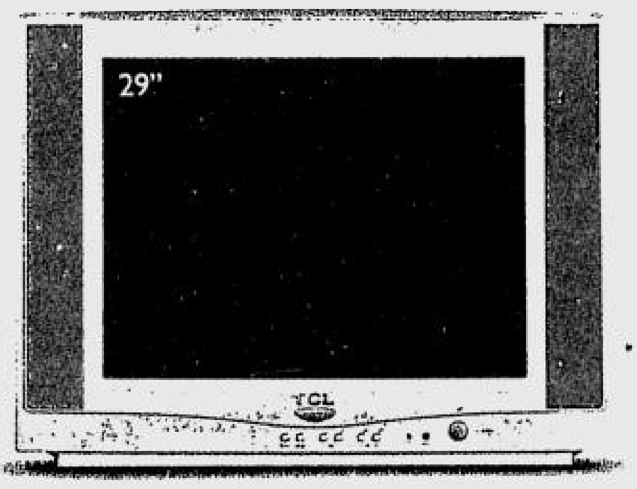

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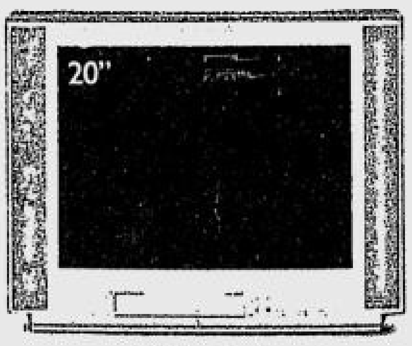

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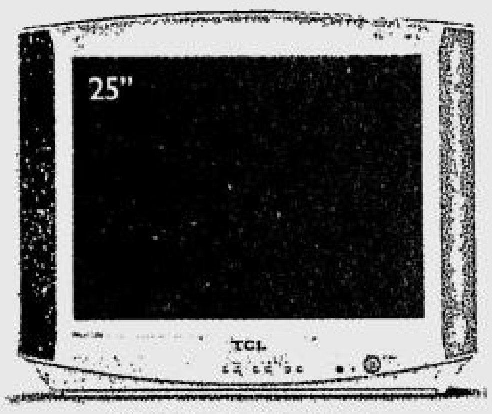

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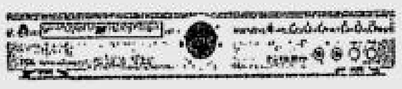

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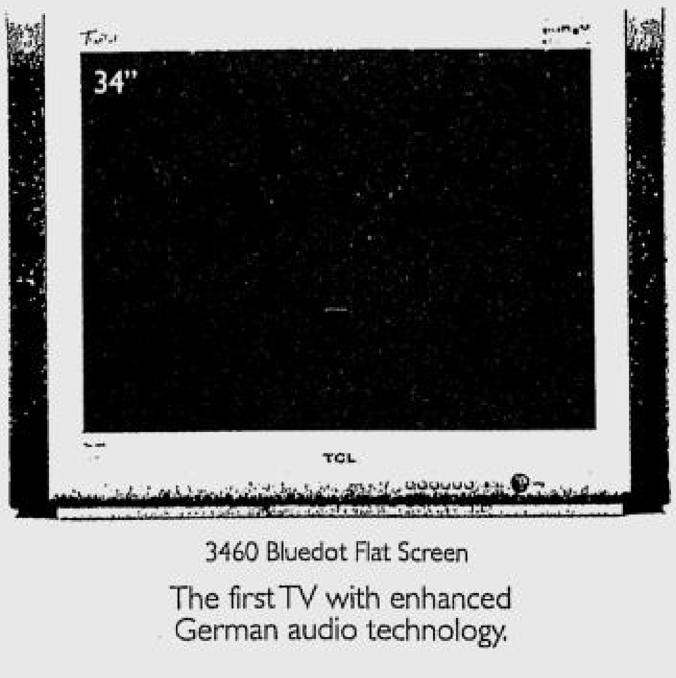

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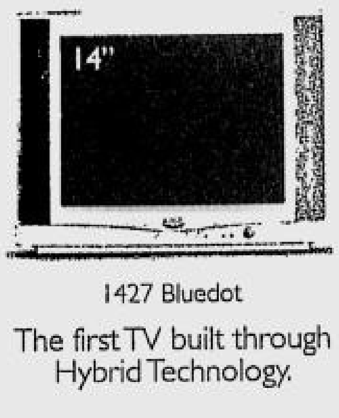

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METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

BF seeks relief of 2 fire chiefs

Claims inefficiency, laziness

By Margaux Ortiz

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando may have an answer as to why fire victims attack firemen.

Fernando said some firemen were not doing their jobs properly.

Yesterday, he sought the relief of the fire chiefs of Quezon City and the San Lazaro (Manila) fire station for their men's alleged inefficiency and laziness.

Just stood there

Fernando said he witnessed such inefficiency yesterday when fire hit the Murphy Hardware at the corner of Edsa and Monte de Piedad Street, Cubao, at 1 a.m.

According to him, firemen from Quezon City and the San Lazaro fire stations just stood there and pointed their hoses at the blaze.

He noted that the firefighters from the Bureau of Fire Protection did not even bother to remove a huge waterproof canvas that was hanging outside the building and preventing them from effectively putting out the fire.

The firemen also were not using their ladders to combat the flames, Fernando added.

"I had to climb one firetruck and get the ladder myself," he lamented.

Less dedicated

"*Mas masipag pa yung mga* volunteers *sa kanila* (Volunteer firemen were more dedicated than them)," the MMDA chair stressed.

Fernando pointed out that as head of the National Capital Region Disaster Coordinating Council, he had the authority to assess the efficiency of the fire bureau.

He thus sought the relief of fire chiefs Oscar Villegas of Quezon City and Teofilo Castillo of San Lazaro.

Reacting to Fernando's "meddling," a Quezon City fireman said, "That's encroachment. We are under the DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government), not the MMDA."

For his part, Castillo said he was not at the scene because he was manning their fire station.

He added that his men were at Edsa to help. "We did nothing wrong. Was it wrong for us to help?" Castillo said.

More fires

Three other fires hit the metropolis since Monday afternoon, when 5-year-old Miguel Perdagorda died in a fire that hit Sitio Kumunoy, San Miguel, Pasig City.

At midnight, Samuel Mina was hurt when a blaze razed a squatters area on IBP Road, Payatas A, Quezon City.

Yesterday, a blaze destroyed a junk shop in Valenzuela City.

The fires destroyed P6 million in property. *With Leila Salaverria and Tina Santos*

Bible school principal accused of child abuse

THE HEAD of the Light House Bible Believers Christian Academy in Muntinlupa City now has more time to contemplate on righteousness after he was detained for allegedly hitting two 12-year-old students.

Edgardo Alulod, 42, reportedly called the two students to his office on Monday afternoon after they allegedly brought pornographic materials to school.

When the students refused to write statements of repentance, Alulod allegedly ordered them to lie face-down before beating their bottoms with a 30-inch, hand-shaped paddle.

The father of one of the victims complained to the police after his son suffered from blood clots.

Alulod tried in vain to apologize to the child's father. He faces child abuse raps. *Margaux Ortiz*

LRTA rate hike hit

MILITANTS are all set to observe "Crisis-mas"—not Christmas—to mark the Light Rail Transit Authority's decision on Monday to raise its fare by three pesos.

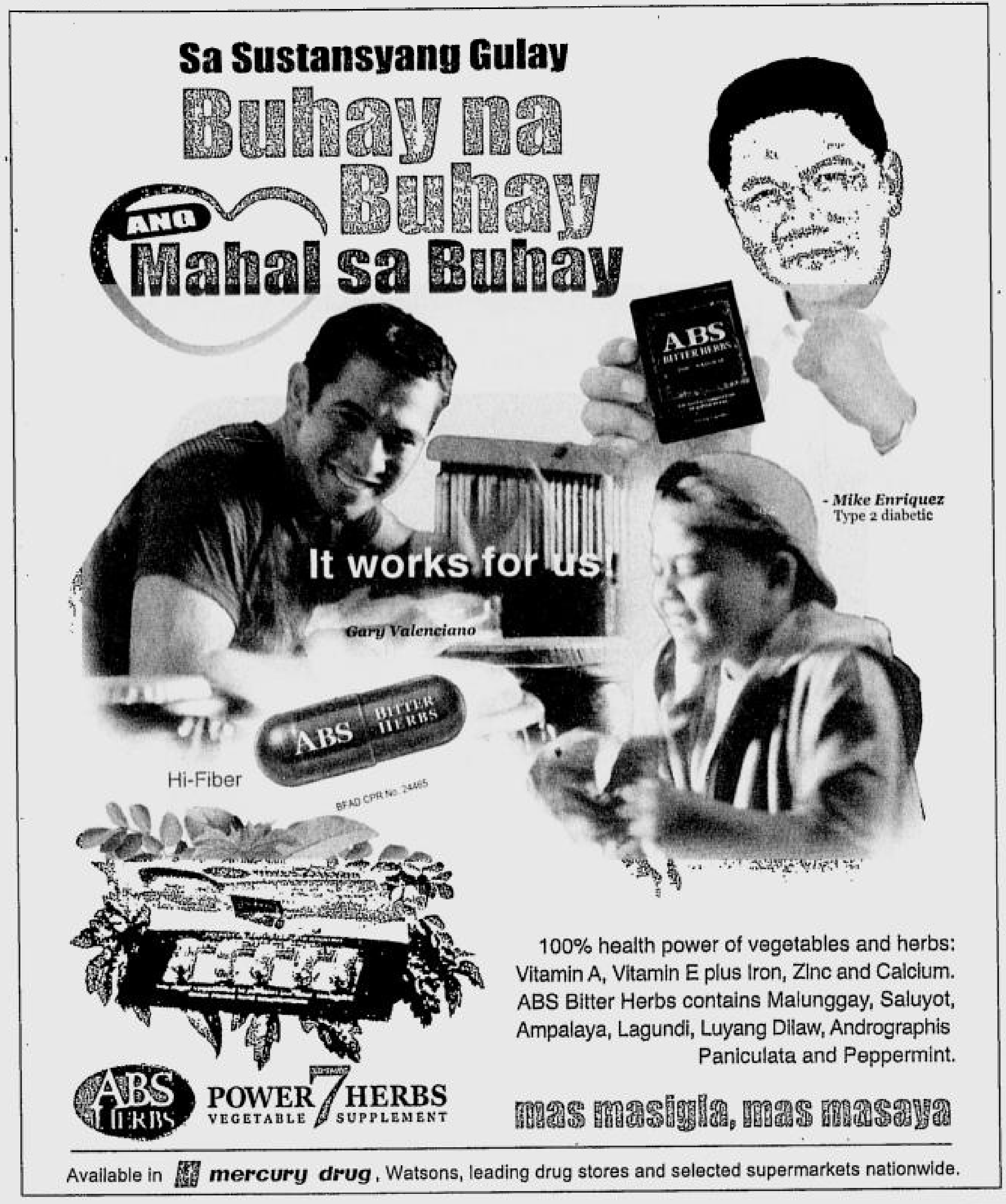
Members of Partido ng Manggagawa, yesterday picketed the LRT's central station in Manila to protest the fare hike.

PM spokesperson Judy Ann Miranda slammed the LRTA for not holding public consultations for the rationalized fare structure that would charge LRT riders P12 for the first four stations, and P15, or an additional P3, for the rest of the stations.

But LRTA spokesperson Evangeline Pascual yesterday said that the company's board of directors is mandated to adjust its fare without consulting anyone. She said the company had been conducting fare adjustments on its own since the 1980s.

Pascual said that the last time the LRTA adjusted its rates was in February 2000. There had been numerous power hikes since then, she said.

"If you look at the figures, the LRTA's fare is still the cheapest in the world," Pascual said. *Leila Salaverria*



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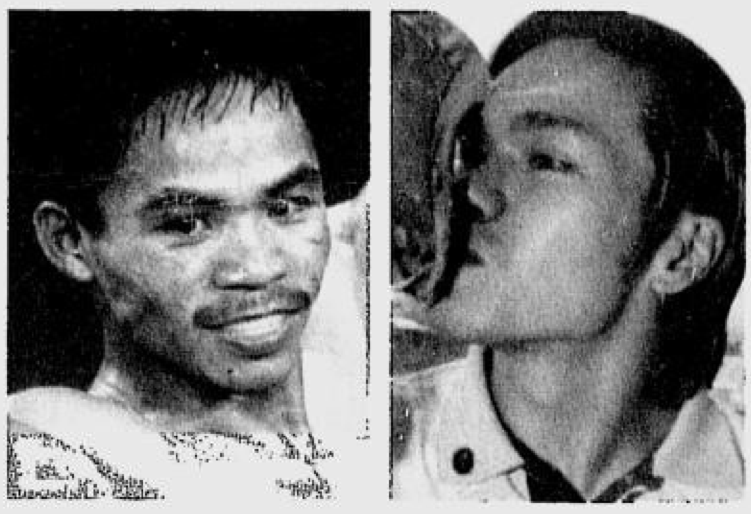

MANNY Pacquiao (far left) and CJ Suarez share the award in recognition of their explosive performances overseas. AFP, AP

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SPORTSWRITERS' CHOICES

Suarez, Pacquiao year's best athletes

THE TWO most brilliant stars in a fantastic year for Philippine sports have been chosen Athletes of the Year by the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA).

World Cup of bowling winner CJ Suarez and International Boxing Federation superbantam (122-lb) king Manny Pacquiao were voted by the PSA membership to share the ultimate award in Philippine sports.

The year saw tremendous performances from various other athletes that made choosing the awardees easy and difficult at the same time.

The women's trios of Liza del Rosario, Liza Clutario and Cecilia Yap, who made history by becoming the first Asians to win a gold medal in the World Tenpin Bowling Championships in September in Malaysia, will be accorded the PSA President's Award.

In the same vein, the Bacolod girls' softball team, champion of the Junior League World Series in the US, has been picked for the Antonio Siddayao Award, named after the man considered as the best Filipino sportswriter of all time.

These athletes, and many others who made 2003 a banner year, will be feted on Jan. 9, the second Friday of 2004, during the PSA's Annual Awards Night at the Manila Pavilion.

The awards night is sponsored by Red Bull and Agfa Color and supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Olympic Committee, Philippine Basketball Association, San Miguel Corp., Samsung, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and sports patron Hermie Esguerra.

Pacquiao was perfect in three fights this year. He defended his title in July by knocking out Mexican Manuel Lucero in Los Angeles, three months after decking Kazakh Serikzhan Yeshmanbetov in a non-title fight in Manila.

But his well-documented, if most profitable, victory came in November, when he moved up in weight and beat the biggest name in the 126-lb class, Mexican Antonio Barrera, in a fight which saw the Filipino's popularity rocket.

Pacquiao raised his record to 38-2-1, and earned millions that summed up to just a single digit: Number 1.

Suarez won the World Cup, a feat only one other Filipino, Paeng Nepomuceno, has achieved in the Cup's 39-year history.

The 24-year-old did the trick in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, against a field from nearly 80 countries, defeating the defending champion from Finland, the tournament's No.2 seed from Belgium and the top-seeded player from the Netherlands en route to scaling the Mount Olympus of bowling tournaments.

Together with Jojo Cañare, Suarez also won the Best Performance by a country in the World Cup—an achievement not even Guinness recordholder Nepomuceno has had the distinction of winning.

This feat, on top of his day job as info-tech consultant, his taking up a masters degree and his role as the spokesperson for Special Olympics Philippines, leaves little to doubt that the post-Nepomuceno era is in good hands.

Ozamiz quint nips Lhuillier, bags NBL title

CEBU CITY—Veteran point guard Edgar Echavez hit an off-balanced triple with six seconds left to lift Shineway Compak-Ozamiz City past archrival M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala, 76-75, in the exciting fi-

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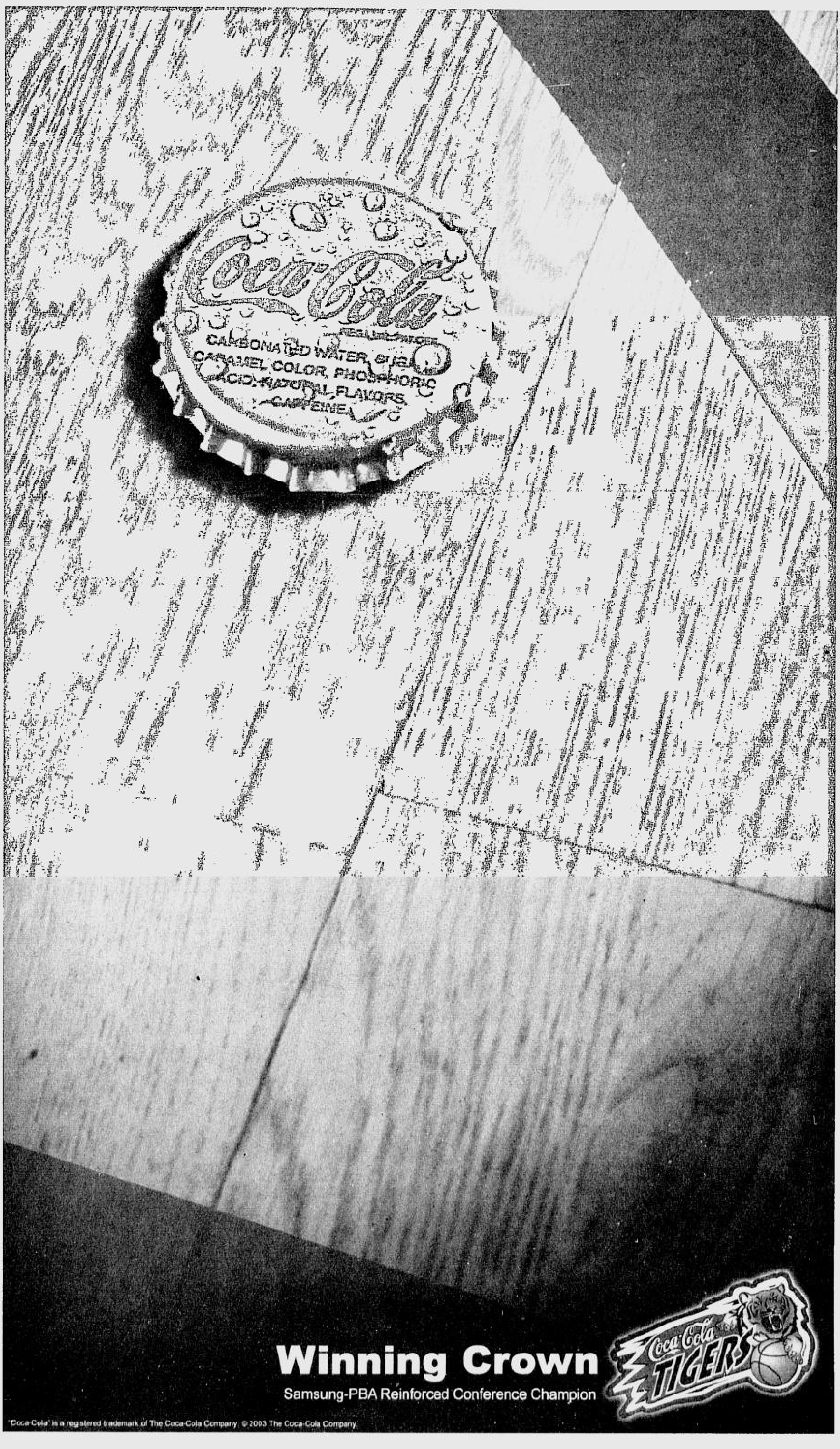

Winning Crown
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Sunkist five ousts ICSTI; Blu scores

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ALEX Compton hit a three-pointer in the final minute and Sunkist-UST went on to escape with a 69-63 victory over ICTSI-La Salle in the PBL Platinum Cup at the Letran gym.

Compton, who has been knocking on the doors of the PBA, broke a 63-63 tie with the timely trey that sent the Tigers on their way to a fifth win in nine games.

The seventh loss in nine outings booted out the Archers.

In the second game, Blu Star's starters all scored in double digits and downed Montaña, 71-67.

Eric dela Cuesta and Jenkins Mesina topscored with 13 points for the Detergent Kings, who picked up their fifth win in eight games while inflicting on the Jewels their third loss in seven outings.

Gary David, a member of the RP team that kept its title in the recent Vietnam Southeast Asian Games, led Montaña with 17 points.

Compton, a 6-foot-2 American who was born here, finished with 13 points behind Jemal Vizcarra's team-high 15.

Joseph Yeo, the Archers' trigger-happy forward, tried to resuscitate ICTSI's dying bid but his triple rimmed out.

Yeo later lost his cool and committed an unsportsmanlike foul on Dondon Villamin with only 17 seconds to go. Yeo was ejected while Villamin sealed the victory with two free throws.

"It was a lucky win for us," said Sunkist coach Mel Parado. "We showed rust because of the long break."

Scores:

First Game

SUNKIST 69—Vizcarra 15, Compton 13, Oreta 11, De Guzman 7, Franco 7, Santos 6, Del Rosario 3, Villamin 3, Espiritu 2, Mendoza 2, Luanzon 0, Hubalde 0.

ICTSI 63—Yeo 13, Aldeguer 13, Ramos 11, Jose 7, Thoss 5, Tang 5, Uy 4, Cabatu 3, Magsumbol 2, Aquino 0, Gavino 0.

Quarters: 27-17, 39-29, 59-51, 69-63.

Second Game

BLU STAR 71—Mesina 13, Dela Cuesta 13, Gatumbato 11, Pascual 10, Junio 10, Gamboa 4, Mendez 4, Codamon 2, Ferrer 2, Prior 2, Victoria 0, Lopez 0, David 0.

MONTAÑA 67—David 17, Magsumbol 10, Salvador 8, Enrile 8, Mendoza 7, Guerrero 5, Coronel 4, Capati 3, Saniel 3, Alfad 2, Dayon 0.

Quarters: 15-22, 34-41, 54-47, 71-67.

ATENEO's Rich Alvarez puts up a basket against SSC's Pep Moore in the early part of their Champions' League game. ROGER MARGALLO

San Sebastian forges title clash with Far Eastern

THERE WON'T be a Far Eastern University-Ateneo rematch in the Champions' League.

San Sebastian College played the spoiler's role as it subdued the Ateneo Blue Eagles, 94-84, after FEU completed its side of the bargain with a come-from-behind 63-58 win over St. Francis of Assisi in the Final Four knockout matches at the Rizal Coliseum yesterday.

The best-of-three title series will start today.

The UAAP champion Tamaraws held the Doves to only seven points in the third period while pouring in 27 to finally take command after a lackluster start that saw them trail by as many as 22 points.

RJ Rizada, cold all day, completed the turnaround with a three-point play off Ranidel de Ocampo with five seconds to go for the final tally.

With De Ocampo and Ervin Sotto leading the charge, St. Francis scored the first seven points and raced to a 16-2 lead. The Doves went on to register their biggest lead at 33-11.

De Ocampo's three-pointer midway in the fourth had the Doves grabbing back the lead, 50-47.

GAME TODAY *(Rizal Coliseum)*
5 p.m.—Far Eastern vs Ateneo or SSC

Scores:

First Game

FEU 63—Santos 18, Isip 15, Miranda 10, Rizada 9, Chan 5, Jones 2, Sinco 2, Sierra 2, Yabut 0, Razon 0

ST. FRANCIS 58—De Ocampo 20, Vergara 11, Sotto 11, Losentes 7, Billanes 3, Kiram 3, Bonus 2, Concepcion 1.

Quarters: 7-18, 20-33, 40-47, 63-58

Second Game

SSC 94—Moore 17, Najorda 15, Gonzales 15, Vicente 13, Uy 12, Maneclang 10, Baluyot 5, Aguilar 4, Rebuya 3, Santos 0.

ATENEO 84—Fonacier 21, Alvarez 17, Teu 10, Del Rosario 10, Bugia 10, Intal 5, Arao 4, Ulchico 3, Escalona 2, Kramer 2, Quimson 0.

Quarters: 18-21, 43-49, 69-66, 94-84.

Alvarez, De Ocampo fight for No. 1 pick

THE RECENT lottery for next year's No. 1 pick overall will have its effect on how the draft will go. With Shell winning the lottery, it is almost certain that a big man could go at No. 1.

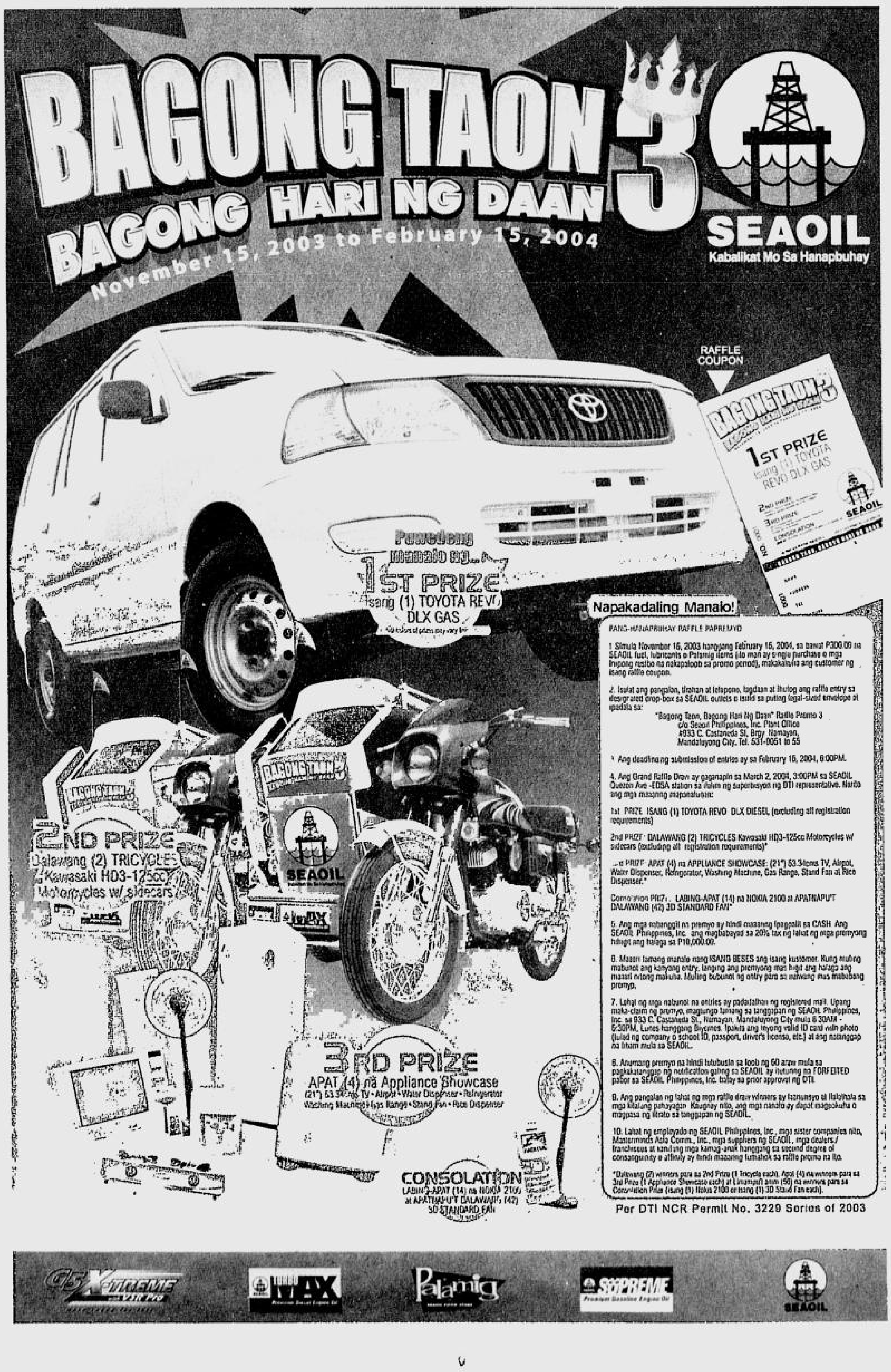
Either Rich Alvarez and Ranidel de Ocampo, two members of the gold-winning national team to the Southeast Asian Games, could end up as the top overall pick by the Turbo Chargers, who will certainly look to beef up their frontline, which has been a problem of the team for some time now.

The one that is unpicked will be ignored by Purefoods as the Hotdogs want to either inject life into their offense with James Yap, or shore up their backcourt with Yap's University of the East teammate Paul Artadi.

"We have problems with our backcourt but we also would want a James Yap in our team," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

The draft will be held Jan. 16 after a rookie camp on Jan. 11.

By that time, the Philippine Basketball Association board of governors will have a new set of officers, with Sta. Lucia's Buddy Encarnado assuming the chairmanship and San Miguel representative Bert Manlapit as vice chair and Shell's Bobby Kanapi as treasurer.



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But did Philippine sports get cured in Vietnam?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU can't quarrel with success.

The 48 medals won by our athletes in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games exceeded initial expectations. The triumphant athletes and officials definitely deserve the accolades.

At least the Philippine contingent did not have to again return in shame and condemnation.

This piece is being rushed minutes upon our return from Vietnam and we are glad to report that, for the first time in many years, there was a totally different scene at the airport.

Joy and congratulations replaced the disgust of past years.

***

Of course, the thing to do now, upon the return from the Vietnam campaign, is to honestly assess the worth of this harvest.

We should also open our eyes to determine who would jump and jubilate to make it appear that all the ills plaguing Philippine sports had been cured during the Vietnam expedition.

For one, there's no way we can compare the overall performance by the Philippines in the Vietnam Games with Manny Pacquiao's sensational stoppage of Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera, ranked as the world's finest featherweight until he bumped into the Pinoy crushing machine.

Pacquiao's screaming triumph was the sort that could send even US-based Filipinos swooning in pride and delight, or maybe dancing in the streets.

***

So how big a triumph did the Philippines score in Vietnam?

Indeed, the winners should get a big hand.

But we should also ask who would end up a bigger winner than the athletes themselves?

Did the gold medals, for one, save the neck of Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain who was reported to be on the way out before the Vietnam campaign?

Will the planned probe on Buhain for the illegal importation of racehorses, suspected to belong to presidential son Mikey Arroyo, be buried under the Vietnam gold medal harvest?

Our revered friend Ding Marcelo, Manila Bulletin sports editor, was right in asking people not to get carried away.

Marcelo did not begrudge sports officials for jubilating but he also asked them to be realistic.

"Buhain predicted the country would win 40-60 gold medals, but three days into the campaign, he proudly announced 75 gold medals was attainable," Marcelo wrote in his column yesterday.

***

Maybe they had chanced upon the initial cures for RP sporting ills out there in Vietnam.

But it would be foolhardy to make it appear that the last international campaign served as a perfect healing expedition for the entire Philippine contingent.

There indeed were many memorable moments for Filipino athletes in Vietnam.

But, ironically, the hardest one to forget involved the boxers who were again ganged upon by crooks masquerading as fight judges.

Until yesterday, Ging Ledesma, comely Philippine Airlines country manager in Ho Chi Minh City, could not get over the nightmarish scoring which had robbed RP of at least three boxing gold medals.

She said she would rally members of the Filipino community in Vietnam.

"We won't take this sitting down, we will write a manifesto and petition proper authorities, even the gods at the International Olympic Committee," she vowed.

***

Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, said he also plans to rally officials from other countries to raise the cheating issue to the IOC.

George Wong, a successful trader who stayed in Vietnam during the Games to motivate a cheering squad composed of Vietnamese and Filipino overseas workers, said he would exhaust means to stunt shameless cheating which had regularly victimized the Philippines.

"We had never witnessed anything as evil as what they had done to our boxers," complained Wong

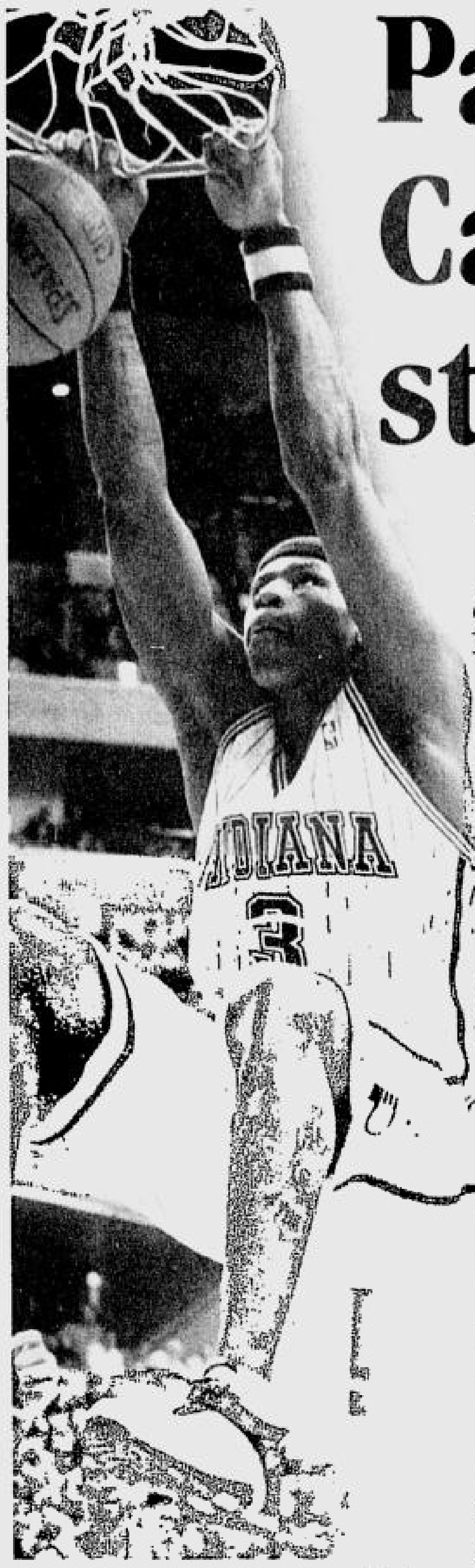
The 48 gold medals were indeed more than what many people had expected.

The harvest, a great improvement from the measly 31 in Malaysia two years ago, pushed the Philippines from fifth to fourth in the overall medal race.

But they are also asking whether or not RP, the 2005 Games host, would be able to do a Vietnam, which started a poor fourth but soared sensationally all the way to the top in the final standings.

To do this, excited RP sports officials will have to step down from the clouds and zero in on the national sporting ills which, at best, got only a first-aid treatment in Vietnam.

Pacers send Cavs to 34th straight loss



AL Harrington of the Indiana Pacers dunks against the Cleveland Cavaliers at Conseco Fieldhouse in indianapolis. GETTY IMAGES/AFP

INDIANAPOLIS—Jermaine O'Neal had 24 points, 10 rebounds and six assists to help the Indiana Pacers send LeBron James and the short-handed Cleveland Cavaliers to their 34th consecutive road loss, 95-85, Monday night.

The Cavaliers dressed only nine players after completing a six-player trade that sent Ricky Davis to the Boston Celtics earlier in the day.

James had 27 points, six assists, three steals and three blocks, but Cleveland's road woes continued. The Cavs' losing streak is tied with New Jersey's streak in the 1989-90 and 1990-91 campaigns for the second-longest in NBA history. Sacramento's 43-game streak in the 1990-91 and 1991-92 seasons is the longest.

Five Pacers scored in double figures, including 16 points and seven assists from Ron Artest.

In Boston, Sam Cassell had 27 points and nine assists and Kevin Garnett added 27 and 12 rebounds as Minnesota won its fifth straight on the road.

The win snapped Minnesota's three-game losing streak against the Celtics and also ended Boston's season-high five-game winning streak.

Paul Pierce finished with 15 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds to lead the Celtics. Walter McCarty added 17.

Boston was without three players after making a trade with Cleveland prior to the game that sent Eric Williams, Tony Battie and Kedrick Brown to the Cavaliers for Ricky Davis, Chris Mihm and Michael Stewart.

In Dallas, Antoine Walker scored 27 points and Steve Nash had 23 points and 11 assists to help Dallas coach Don Nelson move into sole possession of second place on the all-time victory list.

Nelson, who reached another milestone with his 3,000th NBA game as a coach and player, has 1,111 coaching victories—one more than Pat Riley.

Former Raptors coach Lenny Wilkens leads with 1,292 victories.

Antawn Jamison had 23 points, Dirk Nowitzki added 14 and rookie Josh Howard had 14 points and 14 rebounds as the Mavericks improved to 12-1 at home.

Rookie Chris Bosh, making his NBA debut in his hometown, had 14 points and eight rebounds for the Raptors, who lost their third straight. Vince Carter added 21.

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan had 21 points and 13 rebounds for his league-leading 20th double-double and the San Antonio Spurs held Memphis scoreless over the final 6:02.

• TWO of the NBA's most popular stars, Kevin Garnett and Yao Ming, go-head-to-head today on Solar Sports' "live" NBA game between the Minnesota Timberwolves and Houston Rockets at 9 a.m., with a replay at 8 p.m. *AP*

Aqua Blue surprise Pioneer Badminton Christmas champ

TEAM Aqua Blue belied its underdog tag to capture the Pioneer Badminton Christmas tournament crown recently at the Pioneer Badminton courts in Mandaluyong City.

Considered a longshot, Team Aqua Blue proved its worth with skipper Sheila Ambray and Nonoy Ambray showing the way by seizing the mixed-4 division title.

The scintillating performance of the Ambray teamup rubbed off on the rest of Team Aqua Blue, which compiled a total of 126 points to withstand the challenge of tournament favorite Pioneer Badminton.

Pioneer, led by skipper Dea Alonzo, who bagged the ladies-3 division plum together with Isabel Pimentel, finished second with 104 points while Whistlestop (91) and Pacific Internet (75) wound up third and fourth.

Whistlestop team captain Peng Aritao and Joy Balcita finished second in the ladies-2 division during the two-day event sponsored by Pacific Internet, Aqua Blue, Whistlestop, Epson, Wilson, 89.9 Magic and Yehey.com.

The tournament, a brainchild of Pioneer Badminton's Edmin Tarriela, culminated with a Christmas party-awarding ceremony at Whistlestop Shangri-la last Sunday.

Pioneer Badminton membership opens in January. Interested parties may call 746-0828 or 638-5343.

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Lunas puts PABA title on line vs Thai Friday

By Salven Lagumbay
Contributor

ALL roads will lead to Balanga, Bataan this Friday as Pan-Asia Boxing Association flyweight champion Rolly Lunas stakes his title against Thai Phises Vor Surapol in a 12-round battle at Balanga's People's Gym.

Lunas, the Mandaluyong-based pride of Tabaco City, will be making the second defense of the crown he took from Thai Khunsuk Lukprabat last May 29 in Thailand. In his first defense last August 8, Lunas pounded out a lopsided decision win over Deeden Kengkarun in Mandaluyong City.

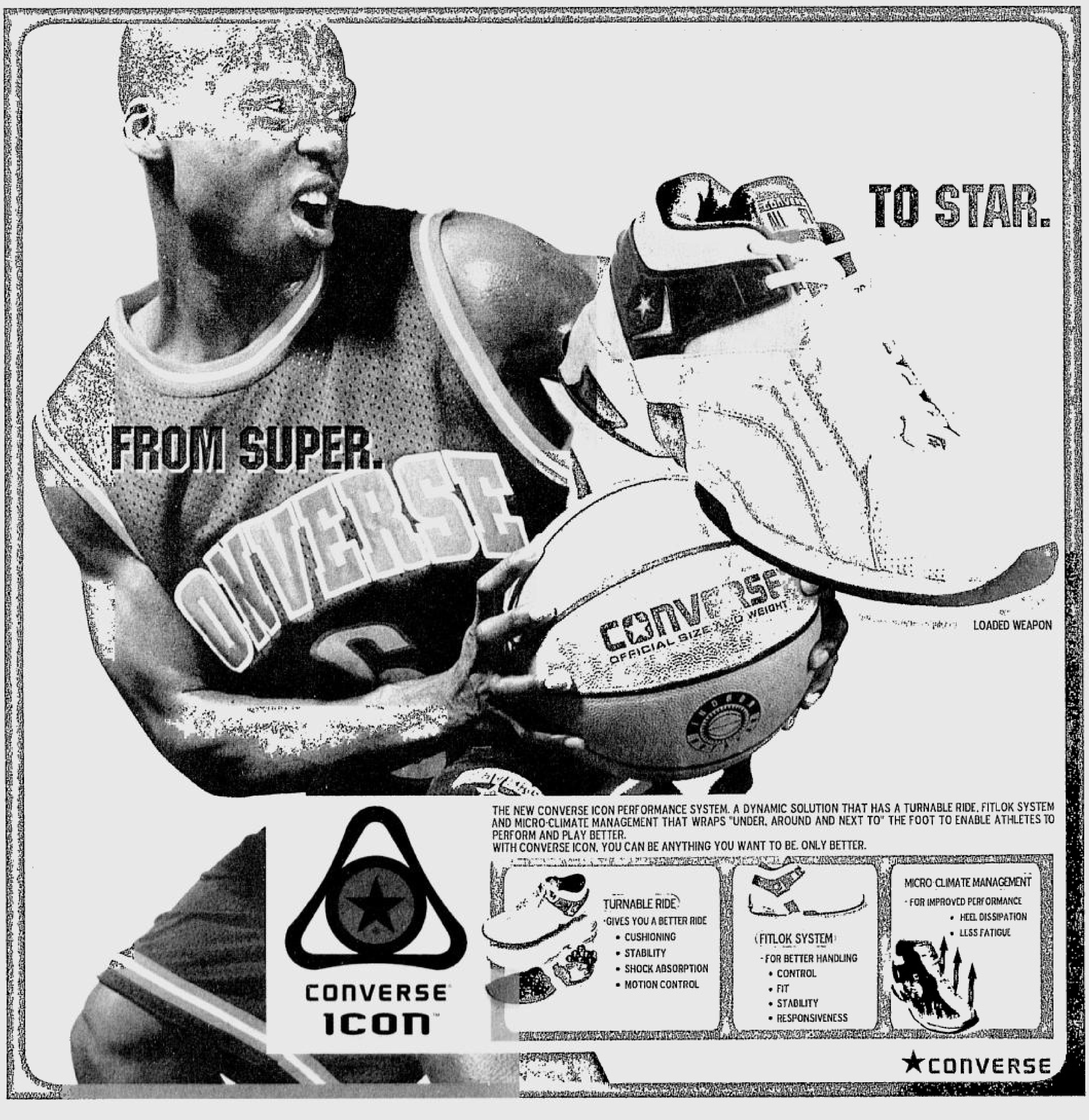
The fight is open to the public free, courtesy of Bataan Gov. Ding Roman as his Christmas gift to his constituents.

International promoter Lope "Jun" Sarreal said a win would improve Lunas' ranking in the World Boxing Association, where he is rated 14th.

The event is also supported by San Miguel Corporation.

In the main supporting bout, Philippine lightweight champ Fernando Montilla of Davao City defends his title against top-ranked Larry Pelonia in another 12-round battle.

Also to be featured is an exhibition fight by RP flyweight champ Edgar Rodrigo against three different opponents, who will face him for two rounds each. Rodrigo is preparing for his OPBF challenge sometime in February.



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RP bet rules Langkawi Asian karting

LANGKAWI, Malaysia—The Philippines' Matteo Fernan Guidicelli overcame a series of misfortunes in the qualifying heats to rule the Junior International Continental A class in the third and final leg of the 2003 Asian Karting Open at the Langkawi Circuit here.

The 13-year-old son of a Cebuana mother and an Italian father finished ahead of Philippine national champion Michelle Bumgarner and Malaysia's Jazeman Firham in the finals last Sunday.

It was the second straight victory for Guidicelli of Team Cebu-CRG after topping the same category in the Manila leg of the series last October.

Guidicelli is the only Filipino to win two races in the three-leg competition sanctioned by the CIK and FIA. He could have won the overall title had he raced in the first leg in Indonesia.

A sparkplug problem forced Guidicelli out in the second heat, and then he spun out in the third heat.

Starting last in the first race of the finals, he zoomed past all the drivers in front of him, including Indonesia's Armaan, before finally pulling through.

With the pole in the final 22-lap race, Guidicelli proved untouchable.

Guidicelli, chief mechanic Jed Neri and Victor Suba said the victory was a team effort. Filipinos who also bagged trophies were Tim Gosnel of Birel-A3 Motorsports in the Senior Rotax Max 125; Paco Rodriguez of Team Cebu-CRG, third in Cadet 85 class; and JP Carino of Intelco Racing, also third in Formula Rotax 125.

Horseracing is alive and well

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THERE was no time to relax for the country's industry players in the busy world of horseracing in 2003 because races were held virtually 365 days a year at the Santa Ana Park in Makati City and the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, proof enough that the sport of kings, though times are hard, is here to stay.

Aside from these regular races, there were other-related programs and policy initiatives (held under the auspices of the Philippine Racing Commission and supported by the sport's direct players like the horse owners, jockeys, trainers and stable hands) aimed at preserving the integrity of the sport and promoting its popularity even if it hardly gets special treatment from the media unlike basketball and boxing.

"It is indeed a banner year for horseracing," Philracom chair Jaime Dilag said in a press statement, citing the full support given to the industry by the different racing organizations such as the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners (Marho) and the Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Organization (Philtobo), stakes race sponsors San Miguel Corp. and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, and the racing public as well.

Dilag added the single biggest beneficiary of the racing industry's impressive growth is the national government which gets a sizeable share from the taxes derived from the record sales. Thus far, horseracing has contributed more than P1 billion in revenue to the government.

Of course, dedicated horse owners like the popular Hermie Esguerra, owner of recently retired Wind Blown and the prestigious Marho, headed by sports patron Aristeo "Putch" Puyat, also played stellar roles which led to the success of Philippine horseracing.

Wind Blown, now six years old, is the richest, most famous and multititled racehorse in recent history. The lanky horse by Hazm out of Wind in my Hair ended his storied career with total earnings of P18,978,695.50, becoming horseracing's leading money-earner of all time.

Also sharing the spotlight with Wind Blown are some of this year's winners of stakes races held under the aegis of the Philracom, namely, West Bound, a 3-year-old chestnut colt owned by C&H Enterprises who won the first and second legs of the Triple Crown; Success Story, a 3-year-old gray colt owned by B. Pierre Niles III who topped the third leg of the Triple Crown; High Octane, a 3-year-old bay colt owned by Hermie Esguerra, winner of the second leg of the Road to the Triple Crown series;

Multi-awarded Security Master, a 3-year-old colt owned by partners Myther Bunag and Tony Boy Eleazer, winner of the first leg of the Road to the Triple Crown and Philracom Chairman's Cup; Free Wind, a 4-year-old bay colt owned by Robert Liong; Perfect Storm, another 4-year-old bay colt owned by Patrick Uy; and Red Star Rising, a 3-year-old bay colt owned by Michael Trillana, who scored a major upset by beating the star-studded field in last Sunday's well-attended 31st PCSO Presidential Gold Cup race at the San Lazaro Leisure Park. The longshot won the grand prize of P2 million.

A sport close to my heart, horseracing is now widely followed not only in Metro Manila but also across the nation, thanks largely to the proliferation of OTBs (off-track betting stations) operated by both the Philippine Racing Club (Santa Ana Park) and the Manila Jockey Club (San Lazaro Leisure Park). Truly, the sport is alive and well.

***

RIGHT ON TRACK. A comprehensive urine drug test program for horses participating in all local races will be fully implemented starting on May 2004. The Philippine Drug Testing Center Corp. has been accredited by the Philracom to implement the program in coordination with the two race clubs . . . ABS-CBN executive and racing expert Jake Maderazo said super horse Wind Blown, now retired to stud, will be a successful sire. "For those who adopt the 'sire of sires' technique in breeding," Maderazo wrote, "Wind Blown's sire line is the very successful Danzig-Northern Dancer-Phalaris line. Danzig has produced 141 stakes winners from 418 runners, earning a total of $77.6 million. This means Wind Blown colts should carry the so-called successful-chromosome of its grandsire Danzig."

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SPORTSWATCH

CHAMPS: Damien Allison (left) and Rosalyn Greenlee with the championship trophy and gold medal the Philippine team won for ruling the recent Asia Pacific Lawn Balls championships in Brisbane, Australia. The team qualified to the world championships to be held in Scotland next year.

Minda Go-for-Goal up

DAVAO CITY—The all-Mindanao regional championship of the Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 football tournament unwraps today with six teams vying for honors at the Tionko field of the Agro Industrial Foundation College here. The finalists are Holy Cross of Bukidnon, host team Emar Learning Center, Maco National High of Davao del Norte, Dipolog City of Zamboanga del Norte, San Lorenzo Ruiz Academy of South Cotabato and Surigao del Norte National High of Surigao del Norte. This is the first time that Iligan City failed to make it to the regional finals, according to Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 football coordinator Jojo Rodriguez.

YKL, Anson's in title clash

A PAIR of stunning reversals rocked the semifinals of the Grace Christian High School Inter-Batch basketball tournament at the GCHS gym. YKL Film downed quarterfinal tormentor UCM, 72-65, while Anson's—the last team to qualify in the Final Four—nipped Konka, 68-63, to set up a titular clash between the tournament dark horses. Christian Lim poured 14 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter to lead YKL's breakaway entering the closing minutes of the ballgame. Alvin Anne Lim chipped in 14 for YKL while Gilbert Sanidad and Ralph Lim added 11 and 10, respectively. Albert Chua topscored for the Cooling Coils with 24 points. Anson's outscored Konka, 21-10, in the third quarter before repulsing Konka's repeated rallies. Dexter Quan and Francis Sy combined for 39 points to put to naught the 28-point output of Konka's Lin Yih Liang.

Salas senior net champ

VERNON Salas pulled off a straight-sets victory over top seed Charlie Niu, 6-4, 6-3, to capture the 35-and-above singles crown in the first Senior Executives Tennis Championships at the Quezon City Sports Club courts over the weekend. Salas, playing out of Angeles City, broke Niu in the 11th game of the first set then went on to dominate the Philippine Columbian Association bet in the second to complete his victory in the event organized by the Philippine Tennis Management Inc. Journal's Robert Mananquil downed Mel Miguel, 7-5, 4-6, 6-1, to bag the 45-and-above crown. Raul Narciso beat top-ranked Ted Banas, 6-0, 6-4, for the 55-above title. Banas bounced back to rule the 50-above division, while Mel Miguel and Pec Untal downed the Chito Estanislao-Fabio Zapanta tandem, 6-4, 6-2, to top the 45-above category. Untal partnered with Erlich Barraquias to beat Expedito Lim and Benito Sy, 6-4, 6-7, 6-4, for the 50-above crown, while Eddie Reyes and Conrado Francisco took the 55-above plum by beating Morris Melendez and Sonny Santiago.

NCA derby finals today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP round of the NCA 7-Cock Derby gets under way at 5 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum, with more than 50 matches lined up. Four of 36 entries scored identical three wins each last Monday including Winslet Paniqui of former World Slasher champ Dicky Lim and Bebot Roxas of Tarlac, Greenwood Albina of newspaper publisher Butch Macasaet, Firebird of hotelier Biboy Enriquez and Thunderbird Firefly II of Big Dome owner Nene Araneta. The event's hosts are partners Ruel Ricafort, JV Magsaysay, Tos Reyes, Edgar Santos and Mayor Nic Patenia. Meanwhile, another NCA-sponsored 7-cock derby is slated Jan. 12 and 14 with Pico Berin and Rep. Rudy Albano as hosts. For inquiries, call 911-3101 and 911-2928.

Ozamiz . . .

From page A23

nals of the Panasonic-National Basketball League Regional Cup basketball tournament Monday at the New Cebu City Coliseum here.

Echavez scored only eight points but that triple enabled Ozamiz to keep the title—again at the expense of the Cebuanos, whom they first beat last May also in their home turf.

Earlier, Spring Cooking Oil-San Pablo finished third by beating the Ilocos Sur Snipers, 94-86.

Dennis Cabigkis, Ozamiz's top scorer with 20, almost became the goat when he committed an offensive foul with 10 ticks left and Ozamiz down, 73-75. But he redeemed himself when he blocked Bong Marata's pass and gained possession that led to Echavez's winner.

Compak Shineway's Boyet Guerrero was named MVP of the tourney sponsored by Panasonic Phils., Beer na Beer, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, BJ Star Logistics and Molten Basketball.

Scores:

First Game

SPRING-SP 94—Crisostomo 16, Manor 15, Habelito 11, Manuel 11, Maghirang 9, M. Reyes 8, Limbo 8, Gumatay 6, Mendoza 5, Taguines 5, Alberto 0, Tolentino 0

ILOCOS SUR 86—Reyes 14, Agapito 11, Ferreria 11, Cabradilla 9, Butel 8, Evans 8, Yulo 8, Quitoriano 7, Lachica 6, Barbosa 2, Ragadi 2, Gumpenburger 0, Sillona 0, Tadeo 0, Dela Rosa 0, Palama 0

Quarterscores: 22-26, 47-41, 70-55, 94-86

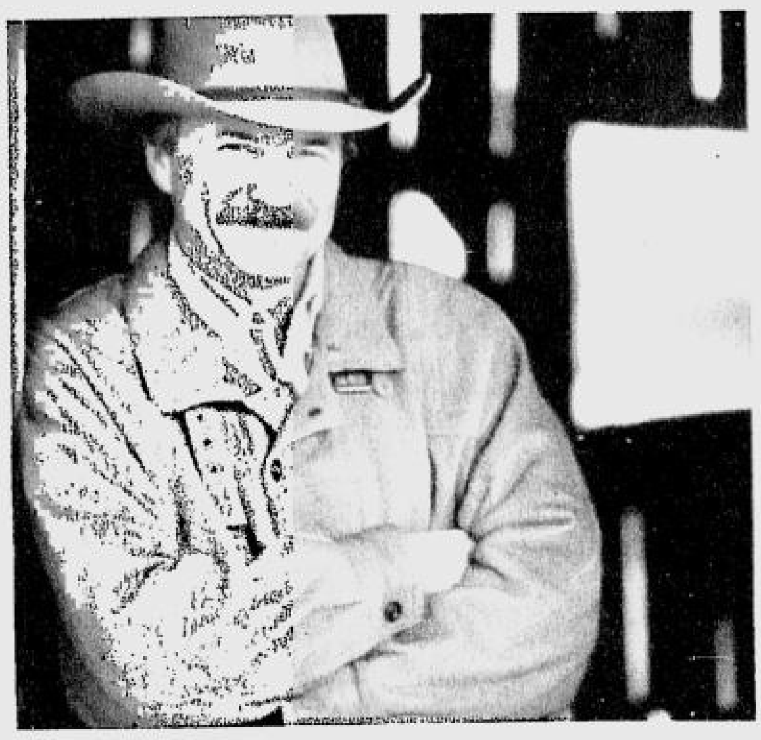
Second Game

OZAMIZ 76—Cabigkis 20, Rodriguez 19, Guerrero 14, Echavez 8, Ferraren 7, Booker 4, Guiyab 4, Flores 0, Alminario 0, Libatog 0, Cabrera 0, De Jesus 0

LHUILLIER 75—Enriquez 19, Dacia 16, Smith 11, Laygo 11, Rodriguez 7, Dela Rosa 4, Marata 3, Aying 2, Lumantas 2, Canoneo 0, Reyes 0, Cantona 0, Ocanada 0.

Quarterscores: 14-23, 35-40, 59-55, 76-75

David Gates at the Big Dome



SINGING RANCHER. Gates today (above), and in the years when Bread was selling like, well, hotcake.

SHOW TIME

DAVID Gates, the artist in the middle of Bread, is coming to Manila, too.

Gates performs at the Araneta Coliseum on Jan. 20 in "The Voice of Bread: David Gates Asia Tour 2004," produced by JP Entertainment Productions and organized by Widescope Entertainment.

Three decades after their music became a staple of the music world, the legacy of Bread is still felt today.

To this day, their hits—including "If," "Make It With You," "Everything I Own," "Aubrey" and "Diary"—are still often heard.

In the center of Bread's success is Gates, vocalist and chief songwriter. Born in 1940 to a band director and a piano teacher, Gates was a child music prodigy. He learned to play the piano, bass and drums even before he reached his teens.

In 1957, Gates was tapped to do session back-up for legendary rocker Chuck Berry. The experience inspired Gates so much that he cultivated his talent for songwriting. This led to a hometown hit, "Jo Baby," which also won the attention of his high school sweetheart, Jo Rita—who is now his wife.

Though married, with two kids and still in school at the time, Gates dropped out of school in 1961, confident that his talents have been sharpened enough. He relocated his family to California and he became a full-time professional musician.

In less than five years, Gates' gamble paid off. He was he able to build up a clientele that included Elvis Presley and Bobby Darin, and he also wrote the theme for the movie "Baby the Rain Must Fall." The song became a hit and a Grammy nominee for singer Glenn Yarbrough in 1965.

Gates hooked up with James Griffin, Robb Royer, (and later) Larry Knechtel and Michael Botts to form the group Bread in 1968. The name was inspired by a truck they saw delivering, well, bread.

The group's first album yielded their only No. 1 tune, "Make It with You." But this was followed by 10 Top Ten hits, including "Everything I Own," "Baby I'm a-Want You," "If," and "Guitar Man"—that sold 17 million albums worldwide and made a legend out of Bread.

When the group disbanded in 1973, Gates put out five solo albums that produced eight singles up to the next decade. These included "The Goodbye Girl."

In the '80s, Gates semi-retired from the music scene and concentrated on ranching. Still, his music lived on in remakes by such artists as Julio Iglesias (a Spanish-English version of "If") and Boy George ("Everything I Own," ska-styled).

In the '90s, after building a recording studio in his ranch, he resumed writing songs. Last year, he released the album "David Gates The Songbook, A Lifetime of Work," which reached No. 11 in the British charts.

The David Gates success story is far from over.

Tickets at P2,000, P1,500, P1,000, P500, and P200 are available at all SM Ticketnet outlets at SM department stores and at the Araneta Coliseum box-office. For details, call 9115555 or 899-2812 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph.

'Because of You' singer in 3 nights at Meralco Theater

KEITH Martin, who sang the big hit "Because of You," is performing for three nights in Manila in January 2004.

Mossimo is presenting the singer's Manila debut to mark the company's fifth anniversary.

Billed as the "biggest acoustic event in Manila," Keith's shows, also entitled "Because of You," are on Jan. 8, 9 and 10, all at the Meralco Theater.

Joining Keith are Paolo Santos, Jimmy Bondoc, the Passage Band and Silk.

On Jan. 8, special performances will be rendered by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, Medwin Marfil of True Faith, Pido With Take One, Rebekah, Kitchie Nadal, AkaFellas and Sarah Geronimo.

The shows are for the benefit of the GMA-7 Kapuso Foundation's project to rehabilitate school buildings and construct mini-libraries in North Cotabato and Maguindanao.

Keith Martin started singing in church and family gatherings when he was 12 or 13.

"My parents were musicians," the singer recalls. "My mom sang and my dad played music. It was always around the house, so I kind of fell into it."

He also plays the piano, keyboards, bass guitar, drums and percussion instruments.

"Because of You" is literally everywhere, even on cell phones as ring tones. It is also one of the most requested songs on FM radio across the country.

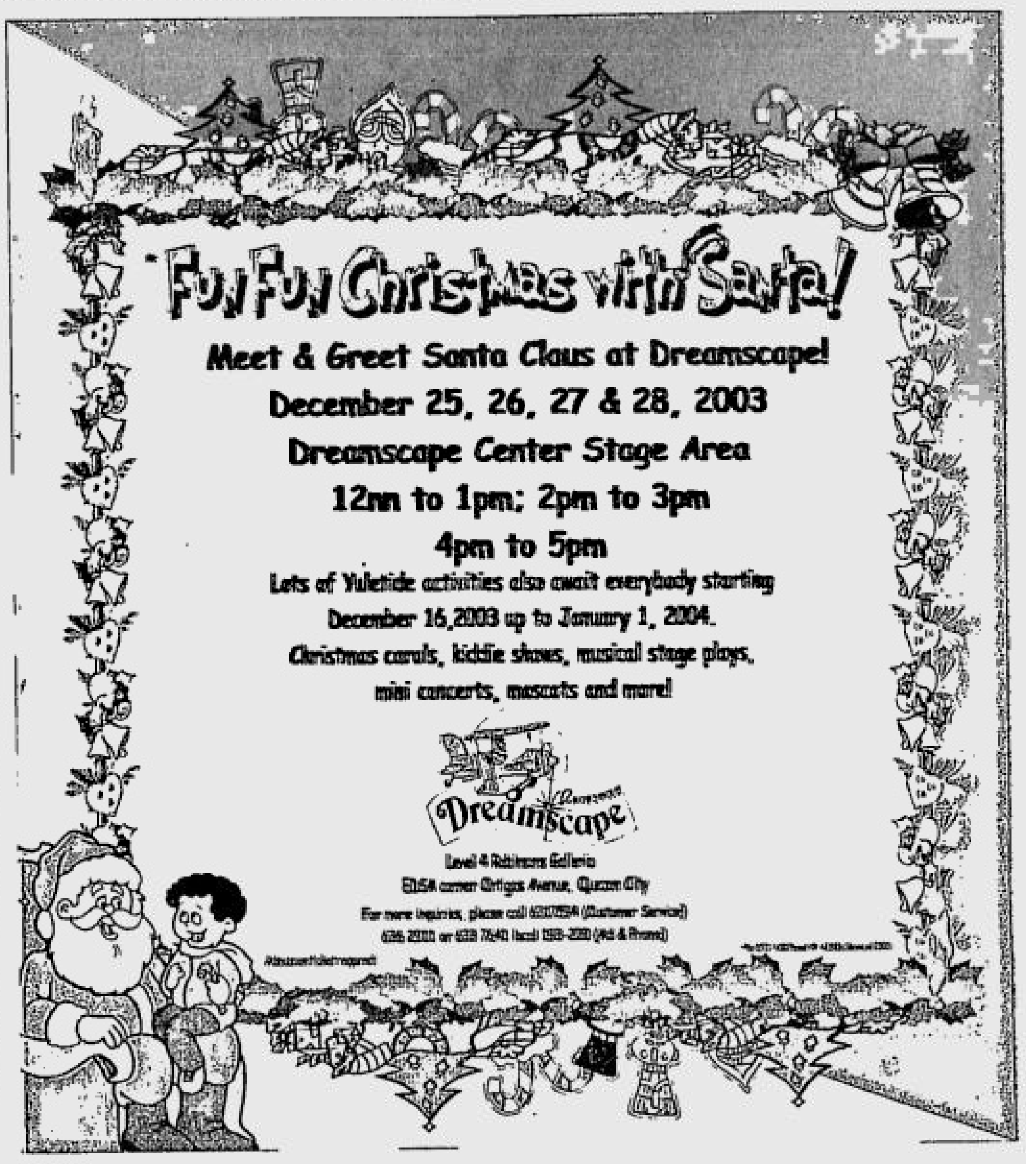
Another Keith Martin song, "Never Found Someone Like You," was included in the soundtrack of the comedy "Bad Boys."

Keith is surprised that his music has gone over so well among Filipinos. To his Filipino fans, he says, "Thank you. Thank you for keeping my songs alive. Hopefully, I can work with some of you someday."

Tickets to Keith Martin's Jan. 8 "charity night" show are P3,500, P2,000 and P1,000. For Jan. 9 and 10, tickets are P2,500, P1,500, and P900. Tickets are available at all National Bookstore branches, Tower Records, Music Museum, Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) box office, Greenbelt 1, Glorietta 1, Robinson's Galleria and Robinson's Place. Call Ticketworld at 891-5610.

"Because of You: Keith Martin Live in Manila" is sponsored by Wave 89.1 and Discovery Suites. Media partners are Jam 88.3, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite, Joey 92.3, 105.1 Crossover and MTV Ink.

"ACOUSTIC EVENT" will have Martin, together with our own Paolo Santos and Jimmy Bondoc.



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December 25, 26, 27 & 28, 2003
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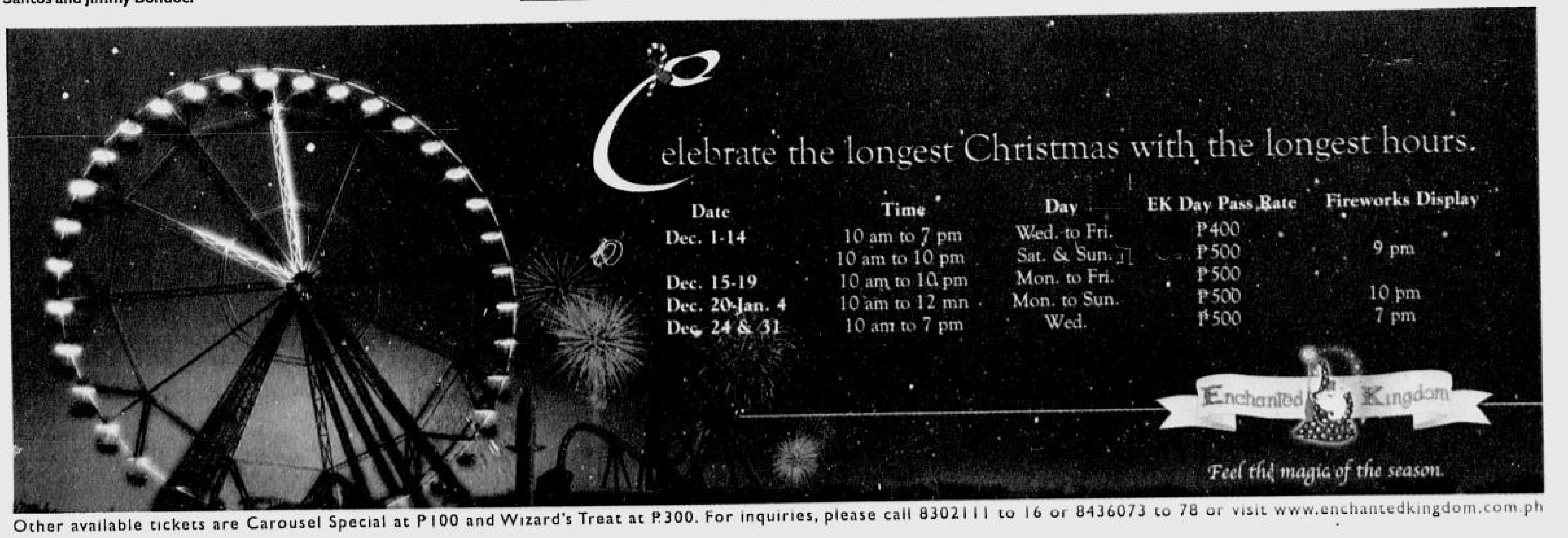

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Dec. 1-14	10 am to 7 pm	Wed. to Fri.	₱400	
	10 am to 10 pm	Sat. & Sun.	₱500	9 pm
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Dec. 20-Jan. 4	10 am to 12 mn	Mon. to Sun.	₱500	10 pm
Dec. 24 & 31	10 am to 7 pm	Wed.	₱500	7 pm

Enchanted Kingdom
Feel the magic of the season.

Other available tickets are Carousel Special at ₱100 and Wizard's Treat at ₱300. For inquiries, please call 8302111 to 16 or 8436073 to 78 or visit www.enchantedkingdom.com.ph

‘One’ shows life is good, after all

WATCHING ML Entertainment's latest production, "One," made one feel that life is good after all.

The show opened with a production of "Dust in the Wind" sung by Verni Varga, Anna Fegi and Ayen Munji-Laurel, together with the ensemble and the dancers. The powerful voices of Verni, Anna and Ayen reverberated as one in the concert venue.

Equally impressive were the performances of the other lead artists: Franco Laurel, Luke Mejares and Paolo Santos, who did their own version of Mandy Moore's "Only Hope."

The ensemble was composed of men and women who are among the best in local theater—Edward Granadosin, Reuben Laurente, Carlo Orosa, Eric Antonio, Joel Trinidad, Roy Rolloda, Ricci Chan, Roden Araneta, Alvin John de la Peña, Sheila Francisco, Gigi Posadas, Tex Ordoñez, Lana Jaloslos, Mayen Bustamante, Mylene Evangelista, Stella Cañete, Tricia Jimenez and Luchie Huang.

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS. Ayen Munji-Laurel leads the ensemble in an inspiring number.

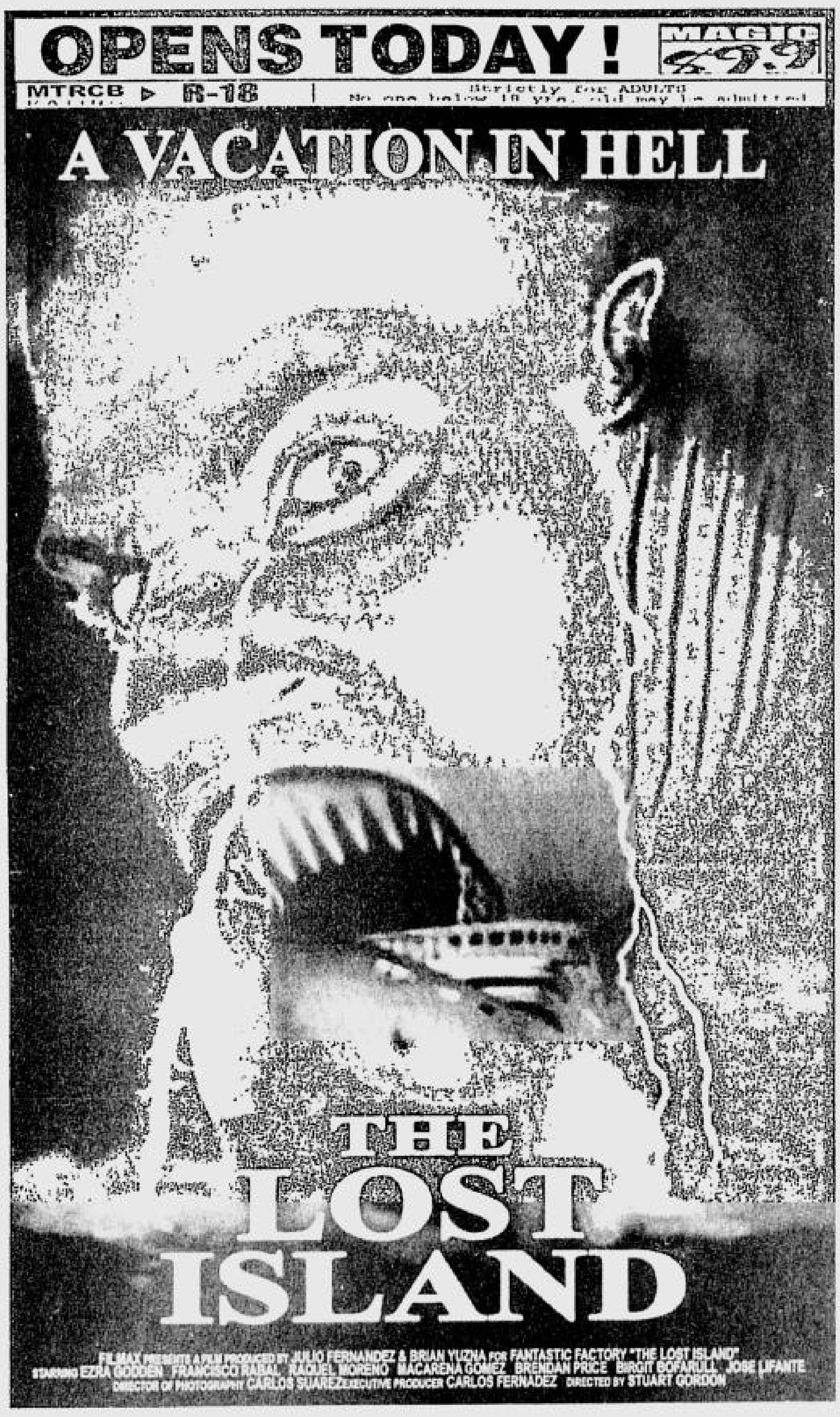
Ayen did a soul-stirring "Broken Wings" with Reuben, Ricci and Alvin John, with choreography by Edna Vida.

Theater veteran Sheila Francisco stole the spotlight with her powerful rendition of "Mista," as she, together with the ensemble, tried to convince Joel Trinidad's character that no matter how bad you are, you still can change for the good and make this world a better place.

Luke Mejares was well applauded when he sang "Bridge Over Troubled Water." Not to be outdone, Anna Fegi belted out her own rendition of "I Believe I Can Fly" to the delight of the audience.

The show's repertoire also included inspirational songs, such as the last number, "Brand New Day," sung by the whole cast.

The Christian concert did its share in giving hope to the hopeless and light to those in the dark, and in making everyone feel that no matter how bad we may become, we can still change and are still worthy of God's love.



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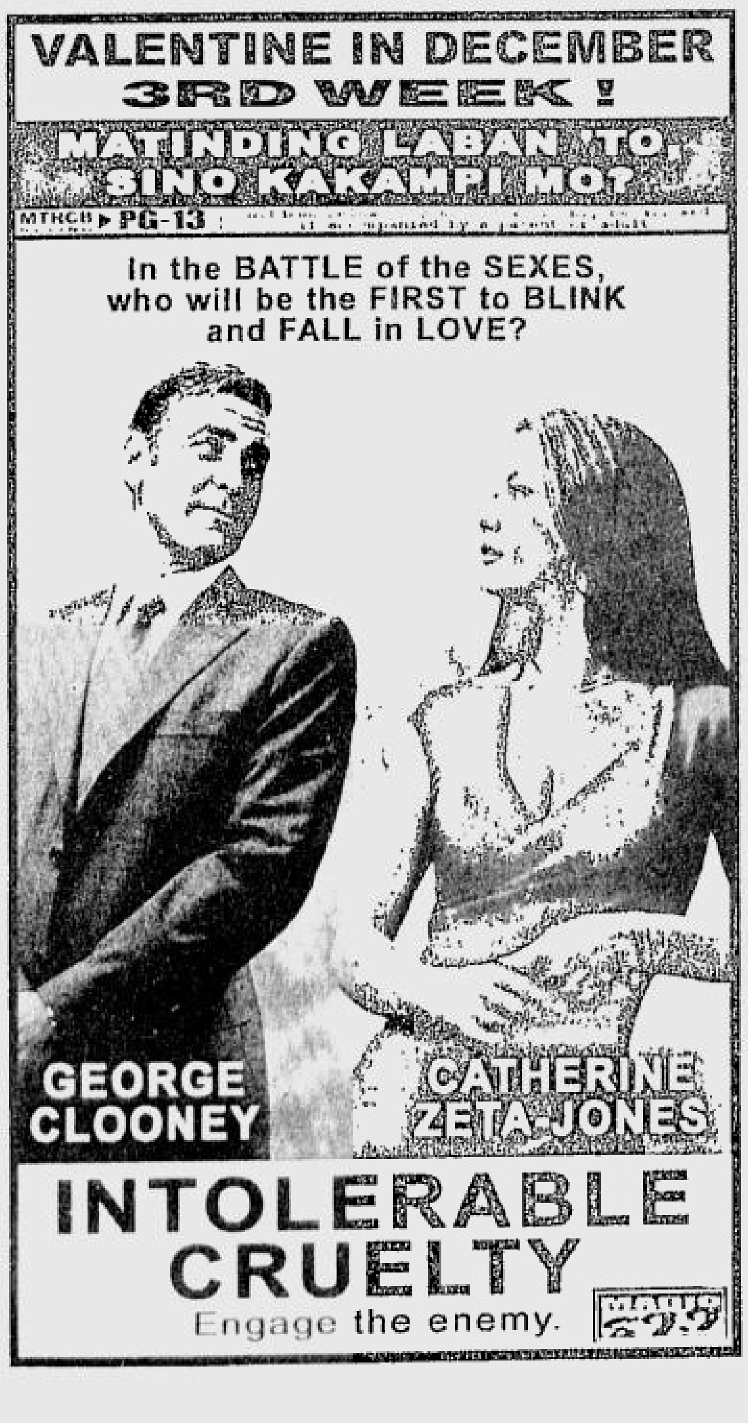

VALENTINE IN DECEMBER
3RD WEEK!
MATINDING LABAN TO, SINO KAKAMPI MO?
MTRCB ▶ PG-13
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GEORGE CLOONEY
CATHERINE ZETA-JONES
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
Engage the enemy.

‘I still love Joey’

From page A29

what we want out of life.

"He says he loves me," she added. "Who knows, two years from now if I still don't have anybody, then maybe . . . The worst thing you say is never, then eat your word afterward."

Annulment

She said she has set conditions for Joey if he indeed wants reconciliation.

"He still has to do a lot of things to gain my trust," she said. "He has to do right by my mom's (standard). He needs to face her if his annulment papers come out."

She said she and Joey talk about a lot of things. "If ever we reconcile, the relationship has to be for keeps," she said. "Both of us have to promise to be faithful to each other."

On Sept. 22, Kris, the youngest daughter of the former President, filed charges of grave threats, grave coercion, less serious physical injuries and illegal possession of firearms against the mayor after he allegedly poked a gun at her during their fight in his condo unit at the Essensa in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

On Oct. 7, Kris withdrew the complaints she had filed after Joey apologized to her on nationwide TV.

The actress and TV host is seen regularly on ABS-CBN as host of "Morning Girls With Kris and Korina" and "Game KNB? Next Level Na!"

For Josh

"For the next two years," she said, "I plan to work and focus on saving enough money for Josh's education," said Kris. "Joey knows what my priorities are right now. I work 18 hours a day, seven days a week. I don't think any man would feel comfortable with this kind of work schedule and paycheck."

Josh is Kris' 8-year-old love child by her former live-in lover, actor Philip Salvador.

In March 2002, Joey filed for the annulment of his 12-year marriage to actress Alma Moreno. Joey and Alma have four children—Yeoj, Win Win, BJ and Em-em.

Kris recently signed a two-year exclusive contract with ABS-CBN. On Sunday, she will return to the Sunday show biz talk show "The Buzz" that she hosted with Boy Abunda until her breakup with Joey. Cristy Fermin, who filled her slot, will continue to be on the show.

On Oct. 7, Kris had announced she was quitting "The Buzz" because she would no longer be credible in interviewing stars about their lives and problems when she had personal problems of her own.

"But I miss Boy," she said on Monday. "Boy and I have a chemistry that you cannot buy. My longest, lasting male relationship is with Boy."

New format

She said one of her TV shows would soon have a new format, but she refused to identify the show.

"Its definitely not 'Game' because that show is on top of the ratings game," she added.

She also said she would endorse the same candidate that Boy and comedian Ai Ai de las Alas would support in the 2004 presidential election.

Earlier reports said Kris would back the political opposition in the election, saying she was simply waiting for the opposition to choose its presidential candidate between Sen. Panfilo Lacson and movie action king Fernando Poe Jr.

"Bong, Ai-ai and I will be a team during the campaign," she said. "Package deal *kami*. But the majority of the decision is on Boy's shoulder."

Package deal

Kris, who had been reported earlier as saying she might run for senator in 2007, added that her ABS-CBN bosses told her "to keep my mouth shut until Jan. 17."

According to the Commission on Elections, the last day of filing of candidacy is Jan. 2.

Kris stars with veteran actors Susan Roces, Lorna Tolentino and Christopher de Leon in Regal Films' "Mano Po 2," directed by Erik Matti from a screenplay by Roy Iglesias.

Kris, who plays Christopher's first wife, describes the movie as "the ultimate love story, which spans the years from the 1970s to the present. It is character-driven and beautifully photographed."

Kris was also in the first "Mano Po," also shown during last year's Metro Manila Film Festival. She won a couple of best supporting actress awards for her performance in that movie.

Judge...

From page A29

trial last year of stealing several thousand dollars worth of merchandise from Saks Fifth Avenue store in Beverly Hills in 2001.

The judge placed her on three years' probation a year ago and fined her $2,700. She was also ordered to pay $6,355 in restitution to the store and $1,000 in restitution to the court.

She has made those payments.

Fox ordered Ryder to return to court May 26 for a six-month review and said he would decide then if she needs continued probation supervision.

The 31-year-old actress has also been undergoing therapy and completed 480 hours of community service at the City of Hope Medical Center in Duarte.

Ryder, who began her film career as a teenager in 1986, earned Academy Award nominations for her roles in "Little Women" and the "The Age of Innocence."

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

FORMER EX? "Who knows," says Kris, "two years from now..." AUGUST DE LA CRUZ

'I still love Joey'

Noynoy: Don't give Cory too much stress

By Marinel R. Cruz

"I STILL love him. You don't say you don't feel anything anymore for this person overnight."

That is "Mano Po 2" star Kris Aquino tearfully admitting what she still feels for Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez three months after the violent breakup that seemed to have ended their relationship of one-and-a-half years.

"But we both realize that we can't have a future together with so much bitterness in the past and a present that cannot be reconciled," Kris said on Monday while promoting "Mano Po 2," a Regal Films entry in the Metro Manila Film Festival.

Reacting to Kris' admission, her elder brother, Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, yesterday told GMA 7's "Frontpage" newscast that he respects her sister's feelings.

The congressman, however, advised her not to give their 70-year-old mother, former President Corazon Aquino, "too much stress."

Kris also admitted she was going out again with Joey, but added that it was only because they need to resolve certain issues between themselves.

"We need to have a resolution," she explained. "We both know

I STILL/ A28

BROTHERLY ADVICE from Rep. Noynoy Aquino

Harvest of honors for GMA Network

GMA Network reaped several awards, including a commendation for the Terrestrial Channel of the Year award, in the recent Asian TV Awards, a regional event covering over 23 countries throughout Asia.

GMA bagged the top plum in the Best Entertainment Special Category, besting the 2003 MTV Asia Awards of Singapore, which landed in second place.

Another GMA program, the "Very Very Happy Anniversary" presentation last June, was highly commended in the Best Entertainment Special category.

GMA's late-evening newscast, "Saksi," was the runner-up in the Best General News Program category.

Earning commendations in their respective categories were "Bubble Gang" (Best Comedy Program), Mike Enriquez for "Saksi" (Best News Presenter or Anchor), Jolina Magdangal for the "Wayda Cosme Story" on "Magpakailanman" (Best Drama Performance by an Actress), and Michael V. for "Bubble Gang" (Best Comedy Performance by an Actor).

RYDER (in file photo). "Things are going well," says the judge.

Winona Ryder complimented by judge

BEVERLY HILLS, California—Actress Winona Ryder was commended by a judge Monday for abiding by the rules of her probation in a shoplifting case.

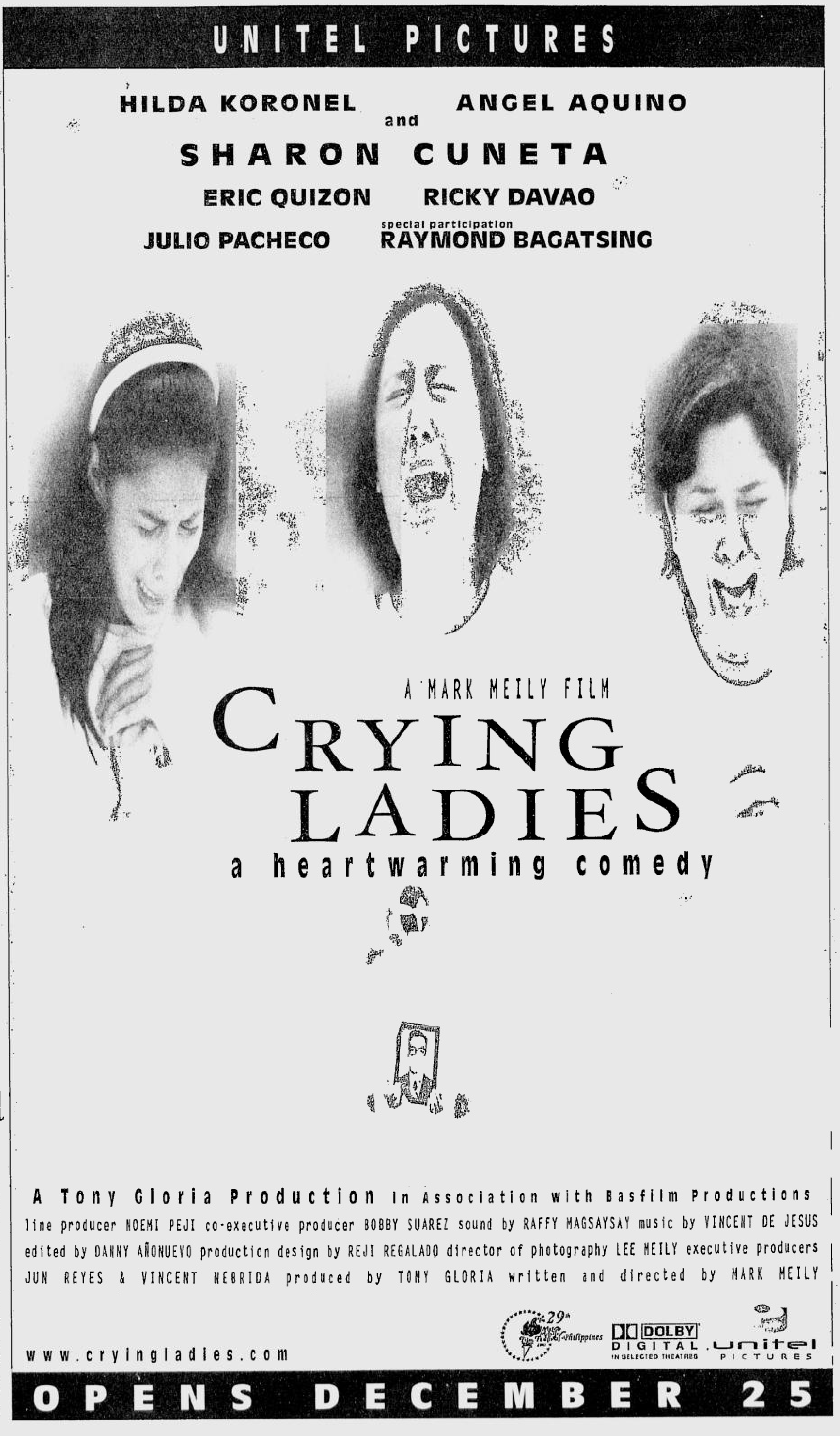
Ryder's lawyer, Shepard Kopp, said the judge plans to review the case later and consider reducing her felony convictions to misdemeanors.

"I want to compliment you on your behavior on probation," Superior Court Judge Elden Fox told the actress, who did not speak during the hearing.

He said her probation report had been very positive "and there's an indication that things are going well."

Ryder was convicted in a highly publicized

WYNONA/ A28



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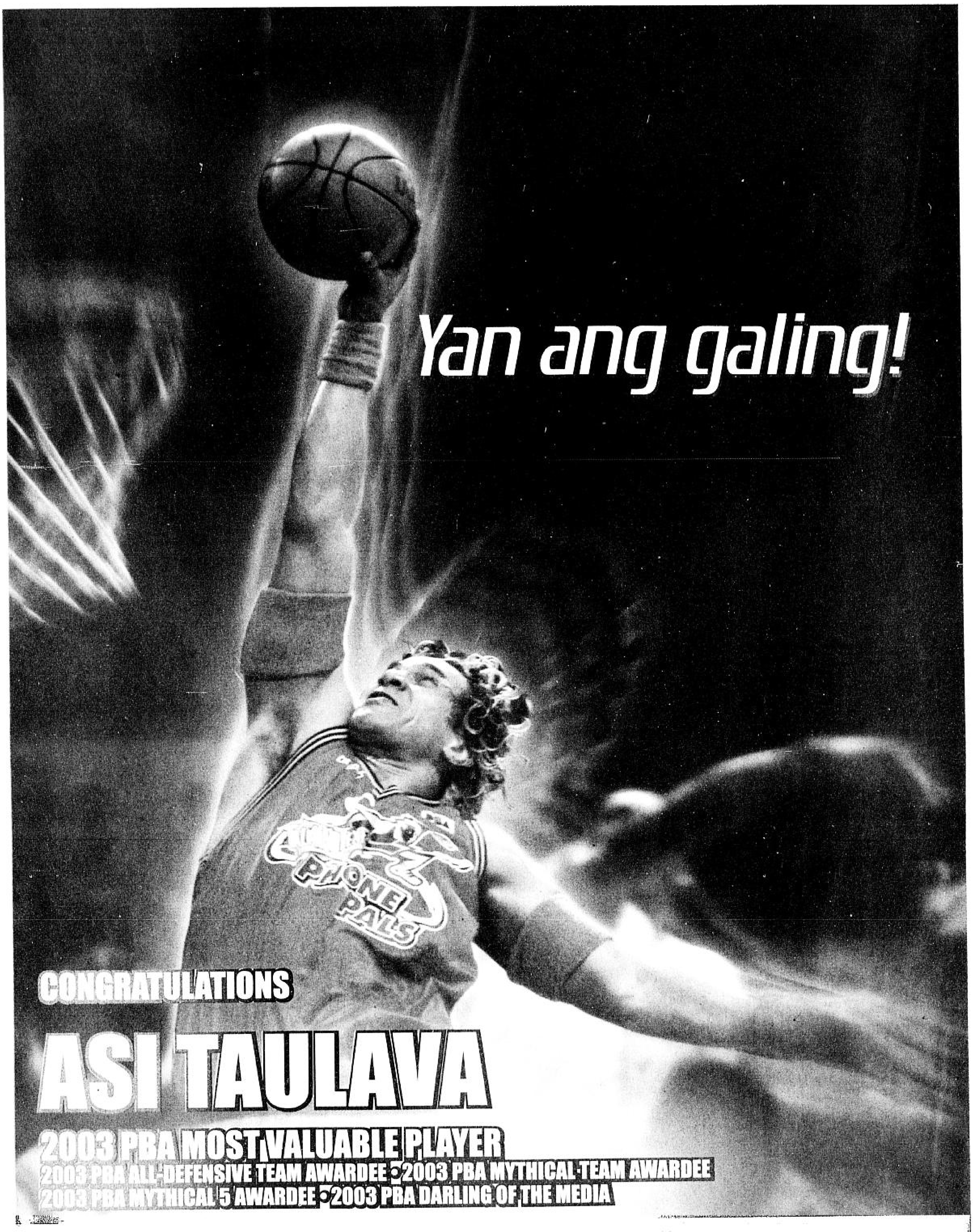

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'03 budget deficit seen below ₱202-B ceiling

WHAT'S INSIDE

- John Hay developer suspends rent payment /B14
- Cocktales /B3

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT'S budget deficit this year was likely to be below P200 billion, or under the P202-billion target, due to strong revenue collection, National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said yesterday.

The 2003 budget shortfall is equivalent to 4.7 percent of projected gross domestic product, an improvement from the 5.2 percent in 2002, when the Macapagal administration shocked investors by blowing through three deficit targets.

For the month of November alone, strong government revenues and disciplined spending clipped the budget deficit to below P10 billion against the ceiling of P17.8 billion, preliminary data showed.

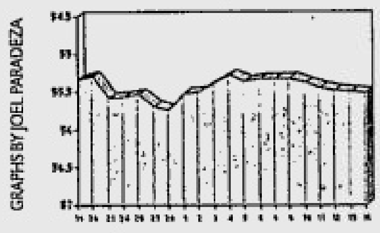
Edeza said the budget department has capped expenditures at more than P5 billion below the P72.2-billion program while total revenues exceeded the P54.4-billion goal by about P4 billion.

As of October, the gap between revenues and expenditures stood at P163.88 billion, or P8 billion lower than the ceiling of P171.88 billion for the 10-month period.

'03 BUDGET/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



NOVEMBER DECEMBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

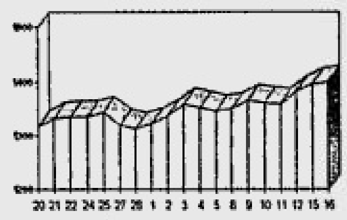
₱ 55.51 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 16, 2003

¥ 107.76 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 16, 2003

GOLD: **$407.70-408.20**
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 16, 2003

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B7)

Stocks end slightly up

STOCKS ended a shade higher yesterday on select buying of Ayala Corp. companies and other blue chips amid a lack of inspiring news.

The main index rose 4.20 points or 0.3 percent to 1,399.43 points. It is up 37.41 percent this year.

Ayala Land Inc., the country's largest property firm, led gainers by rising 5.17 percent or 30 centavos to P6.10.

"The market remained positive, primarily helped by the rise in Ayala stocks. But this was just technical buying," said Asiasec Equities research head Oliver Plana.

"People were expecting the Dow to rally after Saddam's capture, but it dropped."

The Dow Jones industrial average eased 0.2 percent to 10,022.82 points yesterday as investors chose to lock in gains after the euphoria over the capture of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein fizzled.

Analysts said this tempered gains in the Philippine market.

Decliners beat gainers 26 to 19, while 44 stocks were unchanged. Turnover dropped to a modest P558.07 million from Monday's P630.88 million.

Analysts said there was still room for the market to break through the 1,400-point resistance mark in the last seven sessions of the year, given hopes that index heavyweights PLDT and Globe Telecom would be able to sustain profit growth. ***Reuters***

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HOUR GLASS CENTER
- Level 2, Mega A, SM Megamall

LUCERNE JEWELLERS
- G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
- Level 2, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
- Level 2, Expansion Mall, Alabang Town Center
- G/F, Ayala Center, Cebu

MULTI-TIME EMPORIUM
- G/F, SM City, North Edsa, Q.C.

WASHINGTON JEWELRY EMPORIUM
- Level 3, Mega B, SM Megamall
- North Mall, Alabang Town Center
- G/F, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center
- G/F, Harrison Plaza

WASHINGTON WATCHES & JEWELRIES
- G/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
- Level R1, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center

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Cable operators seen boycotting Star Group

By Abigail L. Ho

LOCAL cable operators are threatening to boycott Star Group Ltd. programs next year if the program provider would insist on raising its rates by as much as 70 percent.

Philippine Cable Television Association (PCTA) vice president Philip Chien said in a briefing yesterday that the Star Group had expressed the intention to jack up its rates by 50-70 percent next year.

He said that most contracts that local cable firms had with the Star Group would be expiring this month so they had to renegotiate to be able to come up with carriage agreements for 2004.

Leveraging on its top-rating programs—ESPN, Star Sports, Star World, Star Movies and National Geographic—the Star Group had indicated that it would increase programming rates starting January.

But Chien said it would be difficult for cable operators, particularly the smaller ones, to deal with a rate increase at a time when the peso was depreciating. Programming fees are paid in dollars.

Except for dominant players SkyCable Central CATV Inc. and Philippine Home Cable Holdings Inc., Chien said most PCTA member-firms had agreed not to renew their contracts with Star Group.

Out of the 15 PCTA board members, who are owners or officers of mostly small cable firms, 10 had already agreed to boycott Star Group programs.

"The whole industry, except for the SkyCable-Home Cable group, will boycott Star Group. They want to increase their price by 20 percent to 25 percent, plus the 30 percent that (we have to factor in) for foreign exchange fluctuations, or a total of 50-70 percent," he said. "The industry can't afford this so the industry will just boycott."

Chien said the PCTA was also trying to convince SkyCable and Home Cable not to renew their contracts with the Star Group.

However, he was quick to add that the two major players "had the power to negotiate for themselves."

As for other program providers, he said their rates were "still manageable."

Despite this, he said the PCTA was working with the National Telecommunications Commission for the speedy passage of the implementing rules and regulations for guidelines governing the cable television industry issued a few months ago.

"It's time for us to work together so the industry will survive. We're waiting for the NTC to give us something black and white now," he said.

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Philex mission: Uplift lives, protect the environment

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CORPORATE CITIZEN

LONG before reaching out to communities became the norm among corporations, Philex Mining Corp. have already taken steps to help uplift the lives of the people in the communities where it operates, believing that the very essence of its existence and long-term survival depends on its working in harmony with the environment and the local communities.

Philex has, thus, come up with its banner corporate social responsibility program called HELP, or Health, Education, Livelihood and Protection for the Environment.

Philex president Gerard H. Brimo says in an interview that the company had incorporated corporate social responsibility in its mission and vision statements because it believed that it was unconscionable to earn profit in an area where there was so much poverty, such as in its Padcal mine site in Tuba, Benguet, one of the country's largest and oldest surviving gold and copper mines.

Self-contained community

The Padcal mine at the southern tip of the Cordilleras used to be a logged over area with virtually no roads. Today, it is a bustling self-contained community with more than 3,000 people working for the company and their 15,000 or so dependents. It now has a full range of infrastructure support, including roads and irrigation system.

Brimo says that progress came to the community even with aggressive mining operations because of the company's efforts to protect the environment, for which it garnered numerous awards.

The Padcal mine is the only metallic mine field so far that has an ISO 14001 certification for environmental management systems because it has included environment protection in its core policies since the start of its operations in 1956.

Aside from the usual pollution control mechanisms prescribed by regulatory bodies, Philex embarked on a reforestation program, one of the first mining companies to do so back in the mid-1970s.

The wives of the miners were tapped to plant seeds and to protect the forest to generate additional income. Areas planted were the watershed areas surrounding the Philex camp. This brought back to life surrounding forests that were denuded by indiscriminate logging in the past.

Seedling propagation

To date, some 1,500 hectares have been reforested with a tree survival rate of 86 percent and these efforts gave Philex a "Best Mining Forest" award from 2000 to 2002, a Likaw Yaman Award and a Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Platinum Award.

Philex, in 1989, established a forest nursery, which now has a capacity to produce 500,000 seedlings.

Through its "Nursery sa Bawat Bakuran Program," about 500,000 plastic bags are distributed yearly to participants in the Philex camp and neighboring communities for seedling propagation.

PHILIEX helped transform the Pacdal mine site in Benguet into a bustling community.

The participants provide the seeds and fertilizers while Philex helps them through training and technical assistance, and by buying their seedlings at a reasonable price. This effort, apart from addressing environmental concerns, also enables residents to earn additional income.

Health and education

In the area of health, Philex provides free health services to the people in the community, trains barangay health workers, conducts medical missions and establishes cooperative drugstores. Philex also bankrolled the construction of a 46-bed hospital and supports its operation, which entails P20 million a year.

Education is also one of its core programs. From 1961, some 11,354 have passed through its elementary education facilities in the area and 2,300 were enrolled from 2001-2002. The high school was set up in 1975 and 5,788 students have graduated from the school.

It also implements non-formal education, literacy and moral enhancement programs.

Community development

Livelihood programs are critical components of the mining firm's mission to help the community develop its capabilities and improve the people's lives.

Philex provides technical, financial and marketing assistance to, and conducts skills development and entrepreneurial training for people in the community.

Philex also supported the establishment of a livelihood center to help develop higher value-added farm products.

Its livelihood programs have already produced skilled welders, heavy equipment operators and auto mechanics. Other graduates of the program got into hog raising, loom weaving, needlecraft and novelties manufacturing, tailoring and floor wax/candle making.

Brimo says that the results of these projects and programs show that it is possible to combine mining and community development. In fact, he says, mining firms can be of great help in developing the countryside since they operate in remote areas in the country.

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Victorias Milling Company, Inc., in its to aim to keep up with the global standards and to continually improve its quality management systems has recently been certified as meeting the requirements of ISO 9001:2000 by the SGS Philippines, Inc. International Certification Services.

The company got its first ISO 9002 certification in 1999, but it decided to upgrade its ISO certification to cover other areas of operations.

VMC's recent achievement marks the company's continuous delivery of outstanding quality services to its customers. This also manifests VMC's commitment to its Vision and Mission Statements.

Despite its present financial obligations, VMC continues to sustain its corporate rehabilitation and its position as one of the leaders in the sugar industry.

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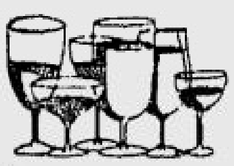

Victor C. Agustin

EXPORT Bank CEO Reynaldo David acquired one million shares of his bank for P1/share on Oct. 21.

The following day, David disposed of exactly one million shares for P0.75/share, representing a 25-centavo loss per share.

On the other hand, his president, Benjamin Castillo, had been more aggressive in whittling down his shareholdings. In a span of three days, from Dec. 8 to 10, Castillo sold a total of 65 million shares out of the more than 94 million shares he reported in early January 2003 as his.

Notwithstanding the bank's profitability, David, Castillo, and key Export Bank directors have been unloading what by now is a significant chunk of shares at significant discount from the par value of P1/share.

First, a little background. Export and Industry Bank, whose foreign principals are Indonesians despite its patriotic nomenclature, acquired a listed status by virtue of its takeover of the shuttered Urban Bank.

After clearing the regulatory hurdles, the trading suspension was lifted on Oct. 1, when Export Bank was allowed to list 2.73 billion common shares at P1 par value.

The first wave of in-bank disposals had apparently been started by the CEO himself when David sold 19 million shares a week after the re-listing. David reported disposing the bloc on Oct. 8 for P0.74/share.

Two weeks later, David bought one million shares for P1/share, only to sell the same bloc

COCKTALES/B4

'03 budget deficit seen . . .

From page B1

This year could be the first time in five years that the government would bring down its budget deficit below the original target.

For December, expenditures are expected to surge to finance an unprogrammed P5-billion cash gift to government employees. But even with the additional spending, Edeza said the government would not exceed the P202-billion deficit target.

"Collections are really pouring in and we did not expect such strong performance from the revenue agencies toward the end of the year," he added.

As of Dec. 10, the Bureau of Customs reported that it already exceeded the full-year goal of P100.056 billion while the Bureau of Internal Revenue said it would do its best to meet the P424.5-billion target for this year.

Edeza said the Treasury could deliver more than P50 billion to government coffers this year against a target of about P36 billion.

Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said the bureau needed only to raise P4.51 billion in the remaining days of the year to beat the all-time collection high of P104.566 billion the agency posted in 1996.

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2003	BMW 318 Limousine	Black Sapphire	Black Fabric	3K	Php 1,650,000	
2002	BMW 325 Executive	Oxford Green	Beige Leather	17K	Php 2,100,000	
2003	BMW 325 Executive	Titanium Silver	Gray Leather	10K	Php 2,350,000	
2003	BMW 325 M-Sport	Black Sapphire	Black Leather	1K	Php 2,480,000	
1999	BMW 520	Arktis Silver	Black Leather	20K	Php 1,875,000	Sale Pending
2003	BMW 525 Executive	Sterling Gray	Black Leather	2K	Php 3,200,000	
2003	BMW X5 3.0d Executive	Titanium Silver	Gray Leather	2K	Php 4,380,000	

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Year	Model	Color	Interior Color	Mileage	Price	Status
1996	BMW 316	Cosmos Black	Black Fabric	55K	Php 620,000	
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1998	BMW 320	Samoa Blue	Black Leather	17K	Php 880,000	Sold
1998	BMW 320	Samoa Blue	Black Fabric	28K	Php 860,000	Sale Pending
2001	BMW 318 Limousine	Cosmos Black	Black Leather	6K	Php 1,450,000	
1996	BMW 523	Arktis Silver	Black Leather	80K	Php 1,280,000	
1997	BMW 523	Aspen Silver	Black Leather	50K	Php 1,450,000	Sold
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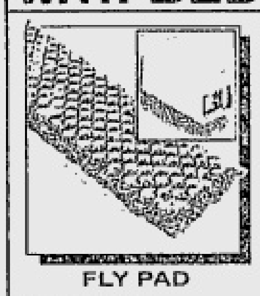

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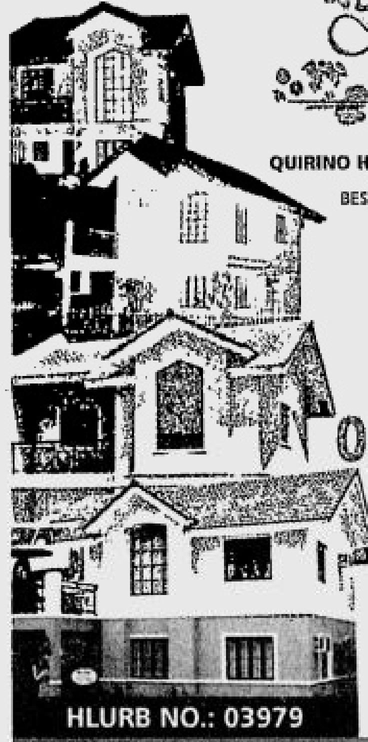
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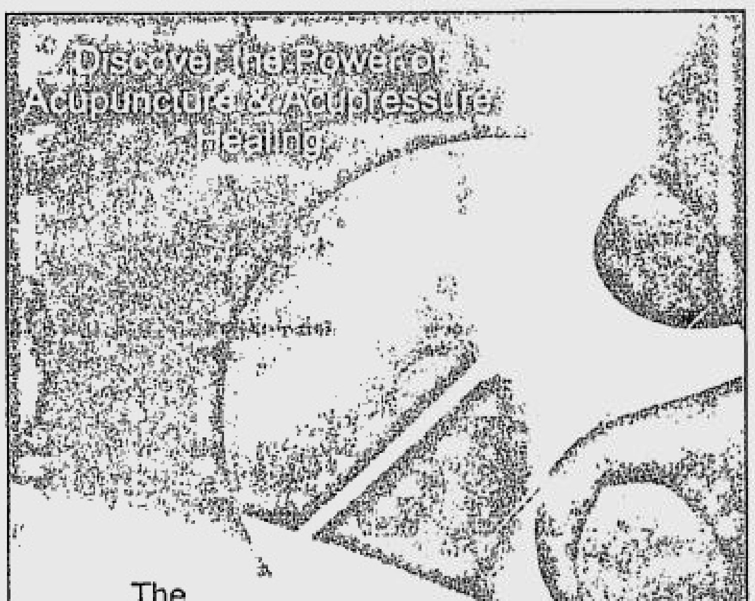

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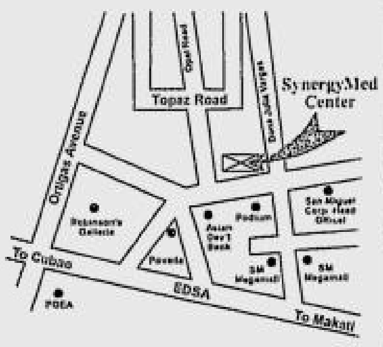
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Neri: Gov't to reduce reliance on ODA funds

BAGUIO CITY—The government's chief economist announced recently that Malacañang would gradually reduce its reliance on foreign-assisted projects.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, director-general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), told reporters here that most official development assistance (ODA) packages turned out to be more costly to government because of donor's obligations such as fees for consultants.

"We noticed that many ODAs go to waste, or are supply driven and overpriced ... so our policy now is to reject as much as possible all ODAs that are supply-driven, because all they do is to enrich foreign suppliers," Neri said.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo had just cancelled the purchase of seven maritime vessels from Australia, worth P570 million each, that would have been financed through ODA.

"Those vessels could have been built locally for only P20 million to P30 million," he said.

Neri suggested to Land Bank of the Philippines president Margarito Teves and Development Bank of the Philippines chair Vitaliano Nañagas II that it would be more practical for the government to instead offer ODA-style credit to the provinces.

He said domestic skills and technology could make up for what foreign projects supply from abroad.

"What is ODA? It's just financing by foreigners, so why do we need to buy from them? *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Banks accept improved GIHL offer for NSC assets

By Michelle V. Remo

GLOBAL Infrastructure Holdings Ltd. (GIHL) has moved a step closer to winning the deal to take over the mothballed National Steel Corp. after the management committee of the NSC creditor-banks accepted the improved offer of GIHL.

Danilo Concepcion, liquidator of the NSC appointed by the Securities and Exchange Commission, said the management committee was now set to submit the new terms of GIHL's offer to the board of each creditor-bank for approval.

Concepcion, however, refused to reveal the details of GIHL's new offer.

"The mancom agreed not to make any of the terms public since there are other bidders that are waiting for the lapse of the 90-day exclusivity period," he said.

GIHL, a subsidiary of the Ispat Group of India, has won the right for a 90-day exclusivity period after it offered a bid price of P11.905 billion, besting the rival offer by LNM Holdings N.V.

It was reported that GIHL improved its offer to P12.25 billion.

Concepcion said the management committee expects to end the negotiation early next year, and that it has already engaged the services of experts to test the machinery of the NSC steel plant in Iligan City to prepare for its rehabilitation.

LNM Holdings N.V., on the other hand, earlier said it was willing to improve its offer should NSC creditor-banks and GIHL fail to ink a deal within the 90-day exclusivity period.

LNM general manager Eric Tiere said LNM was willing to translate the profit-sharing scheme included in its original offer into "hot cash" to improve its P7-billion original offer.

He added the company was willing to pour in an additional $70 million to upgrade the NSC facilities and to raise its capitalization.

Huge losses of up to P16 billion forced the NSC to shut down in 1999, causing huge economic losses to Iligan City and Mindanao in terms of production of downstream industries and lost employment opportunities.

NSC had 2,000 employees when it shut down.

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PHILHEALTH CIRCULAR
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TO : ACCREDITED TB-DOTS CENTERS, CLAIMS PROCESSING DEPARTMENTS NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION AND PHILHEALTH REGIONAL OFFICES AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED
SUBJECT : ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PROCESSING OF ANTI-TUBERCULOSIS (DOTS) PACKAGE CLAIM APPLICATIONS

With reference to Circular No. 19 series of 2003 regarding PhilHealth's Outpatient Anti-Tuberculosis or Directly Observed Treatment Shortcourse (DOTS) Benefit Package, the following are additional guidelines to facilitate processing of claims applications

The following documents must be submitted to the Receiving Section of PhilHealth within sixty (60) days upon completion of each treatment phase:

- PhilHealth Claim Form 1
- PhilHealth Claim Form 5
- Copy of National Tuberculosis Control Program (NPT) Treatment Card
- Supporting documents (as required for eligibility checking)

Please take note that the evaluation criteria for eligibility to DOTS Package is based on Circular No. 19 and the Manual of Procedures of the National Tuberculosis Control Program (NTP). Below are important points to be considered in filing the claim:

1. This package is intended only for new cases of pulmonary and extrapulmonary TB in children and adults.
2. Examination of three (3) sputum specimen is mandatory to all adult patients prior to enrollment to DOTS.
3. Together with all other documents enumerated in item No. 1, claims for smear-negative TB adult patients shall present a copy of the Diagnostics Committee's recommendation to enroll patients to DOTS.
4. The 4,000 pesos benefit shall cover only diagnostic work-up, consultation services and drugs provided on or after enrollment to DOTS. The patient shall shoulder costs for direct sputum smear examination, consultation services and other incidental expenses incurred prior to start of treatment.
5. Date of enrollment to DOTS is the date when the first dose of medication was actually taken by the patient.
6. In order to monitor adult patients' response to DOTS, sputum smear follow-up examination must be performed based on the schedule specified on Table 5a of the Manual of Procedures of the NTP.
7. Claims for patients who were unable to produce good sputum specimen for follow-up smear examination shall also be paid. In such cases, the circumstance (Unable to Produce Sputum) must be noted in the portion of NTP Treatment Form allotted for the Sputum Examination Results.
8. If the NTP Form shows incomplete provision of TB medications, claims shall still be processed, provided that, patient's management was in conformity with the NTP guidelines as described on Table 9a of the MOP and not part of the exclusion criteria listed under PhilHealth Circular No. 19 series of 2003.

   Claims for completed DOTS package shall be paid regardless of treatment outcome. However, claims for patients who defaulted DOTS shall be denied.

   Claims for transfer-out patients shall also be paid, provided that, patient was properly referred to a PhilHealth-accredited facility and was transferred with referral slip. In such cases, the referring facility shall be responsible for filing the claim together with properly filled-out NTP Referral/Transfer Form. Claims filed by receiving DOTS clinics for transfer-in patients shall be denied

11. PhilHealth DOTS benefit is one (1) package payable in two (2) installments. Reckoning date for a patient's contribution eligibility shall be the date of enrollment or registration to DOTS. Claims for patients who only satisfied the contribution eligibility during the progress of DOTS shall be denied.
12. ICD-10 coding shall be based on the diagnosis written on PhilHealth Form 5 and the submitted NTP Treatment Form. Claims without or incorrect ICD-10 codes shall be returned to the facility for compliance to correct ICD-10 coding.
13. Incomplete NTP Form and/ or PhilHealth Claim Form 5 shall be returned to the DOTS facility for completion.
14. Claims with discrepancies in the NTP Form and PhilHealth Claim Form 5 shall be returned to the DOTS facility to reconcile such inconsistencies in the information.

Please be guided accordingly.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc
President and CEO

Table 5a. SCHEDULE OF SPUTUM SMEAR FOLLOW-UP EXAMINATION (Category 1)

Schedule of Sputum Smear Follow-up Examination	Category I (2HRZE/4HR)	
	Regular Treatment	With One Month of Extension (HRZE)
Towards the end of the 2nd month	YES	(if positive)
Towards the end of the 3rd month	(if negative)	YES
Towards the end of the 4th month	YES	
Towards the end of the 5th month		YES
In the beginning of the 6th month	YES[*1]	
In the beginning of the 7th month		YES[*1]

*1 Check the follow-up sputum smear examination at the end of the treatment (during the last week of treatment) for the patient who has smear positive in the last follow-up smear examination and shows smear negative in the repeated smear examination.

Table 9a. Treatment Modifications for New Smear-Positive Cases Who Interrupted Treatment

Length of treatment	Length of Interruption	Do a smear?	Result of smear?	Register again?	Treatment modification
Less than one month	Less than 2 weeks	No		No. use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I
	2 weeks or more	Yes	Positive	No. open a new treatment card	Start again on Regimen - I
			Negative	No. use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I
	Less than 2 weeks	No		No. use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I
	o 8 weeks	Yes	Positive	No. use the same treatment card	Complete the remaining intensive Phase, add one extra month of Intensive Phase
			Negative	No. use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I
	More than 8 weeks	Yes	Positive	Close the previous registration as "Defaulter", then re-register as "RAD", open a new treatment card	Start on Regimen - I
			Negative	Close the previous registration as "Defaulter", then re-register as "Other", but use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I
More than two months	Less than 2 weeks	No		No. use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I
	2 to 8 weeks	Yes	Positive	Close the previous registration as "Defaulter" (*1), then re-register as "RAD", open a new treatment card	Start on Regimen - II
			Negative	No. use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I
	More than 8 weeks	Yes	Positive	Close the previous registration as "Defaulter", then re-register as "RAD", open a new treatment card	Start on Regimen - II
			Negative	Close the previous registration as "Defaulter", then re-register as "Other", but use the same treatment card	Continue Regimen - I

*1 This is the exceptional case to define as "Defaulter" for a patient who interrupted treatment of less than eight weeks.

(PDI – December 17, 2003)

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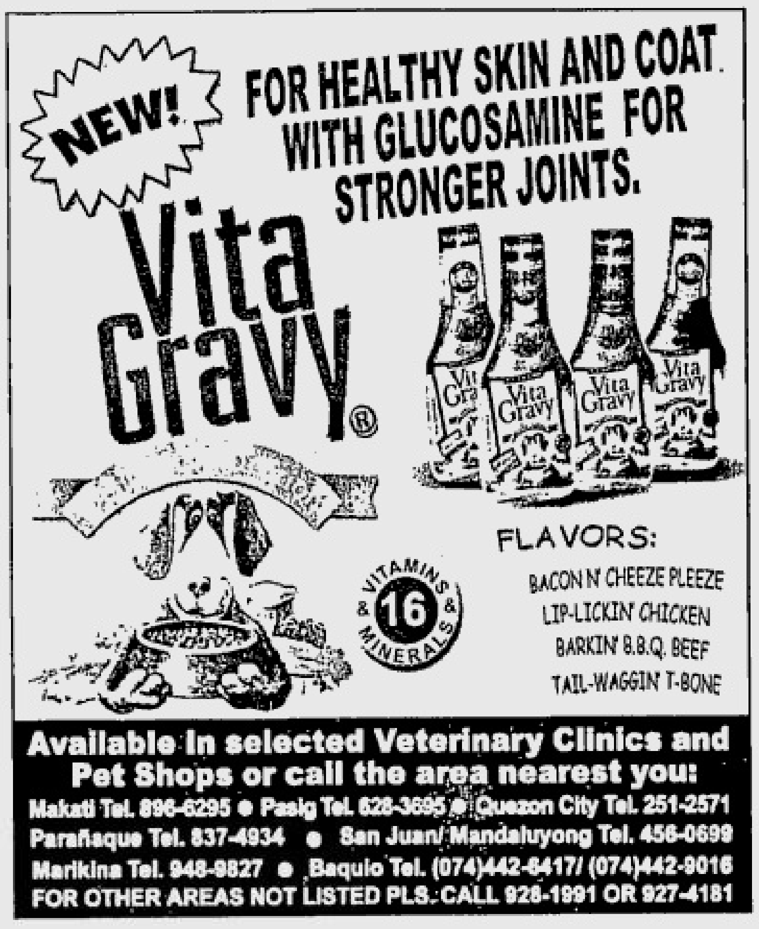
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Merry Christmas Abby! God bless you and your family – Rod
size: 3 lines
cost: P165 vat incl.
Happy Holidays. [illegible] May God bless you always. – [illegible]
size: 2 lines
cost: P110 vat incl.
Cherrie,
Season after season, I'm so thankful for special friends like you. Happy Holidays!
Much love,
PJ
size: 1 col x 4 cm
cost: P[illegible] vat incl.
For more information, visit or call any Inquirer branch. Prices are VAT exclusive.
Deadline of Ad Placement: *December 20, 2003*
INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS

BTr awards bonds worth ₱3.5B at 11%

THE PHILIPPINE seven-year zero-coupon bond fetched a yield of 11.125 percent at a government auction on Tuesday.

The Bureau of Treasury awarded the full allotment worth P3.5 billion $63 million) after tenders hit P6.675 billion.

Traders earlier said they were looking for a yield of 11 to 11.25 percent.

The best bid for the seven-year bond was 11.25 percent in the secondary market on Tuesday.

The offering was held to meet the investment demand of an undisclosed government-controlled corporation which had to buy the securities at auction for better pricing.

The government will use the proceeds to help fund its budget deficit.

Zero-coupon bonds allow investors to deduct the interest rate up front instead of receiving a coupon later.

The Philippines—the largest sovereign debt issuer in Asia outside Japan—last sold $175 million worth of 18-month zero-coupon bonds at a gross yield of 3.25 percent in August.

"We see the paper at 11.25 percent. We don't expect huge demand since this is a zero coupon-bond and it's for a government firm," a trader said.

Another trader said yields were steady in the secondary market with very few successful transactions as most players were sidelined ahead of the Christmas holidays.

Reuters

Cocktales

From page B3

for a 25-percent loss the following day.

Even the bank's chair, Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., had been bitten by the disposal bug. Late last month, Ortiz-Luis reported unloading more than 164 million shares he had been holding "as a voting trustee."

Despite the disposal, the Export Bank chair still holds 926 million shares as a "voting trustee," in addition to Ortiz-Luis' directly owning 26 million shares.

Export Bank did not disclose who had been picking up those shares; according to the grapevine, the transactions merely facilitated the transfer of the shares among the Indonesian principals.

Shoptalk

THE NUMBER 2 and number 3 newspapers continue to shrink in circulation, now each printing less than 100,000 copies/day, according to the INQUIRER circulation department's industry monitor.

One business paper, on the other hand, has informed the staff that their mandatory 13th month salary would be paid in two installments.

On the whole, the local newspaper industry has not been spared from the worldwide decline in readership and the migration of readers to Internet and cable TV news. The good news is, the local industry is showing strong growth in the glossies, as can be gleaned from the ever-increasing number of magazines being churned out by the Lopez and the Gowongkei stables.

The sex-and-crime tabloids, as usual, continue to be money-spinners, despite, or probably because of, their mom-and-pop style of operations.

Heard through the grapevine

THE CAMPOSES of Unilab are going full-steam ahead with the redevelopment of their 24-hectare Edsa Central property at the busy Edsa-Shaw Blvd. intersection no matter who gets elected President.

They signed last week a contract with Essensa developer Joey Antonio to build the first of two residential condominiums that would be connected by covered walkway to the MRT station.

Unlike the A-list Essensa, the "Soho Central" condo targets the overseas middle-class market with payment terms of $1[illegible]month for a 40-square-meter studio.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

BPI sees 5-10% increase in net income in 2004

By Elena R. Torrijos

THE BANK of the Philippine Islands, the country's second largest lender, expects a 5-10 percent increase in profits next year on the back of robust sales of retail banking products such as credit cards and consumer loans.

BPI president and chief executive Xavier Loinaz said in an interview yesterday that consumer spending should strengthen next year, which would lead to a good performance of its credit cards, car loans and home loans.

"I think we'll have to do a lot more in the SME (small and medium enterprises) sector," Loinaz said.

On the sale of bad assets, Loinaz disclosed that the bank was currently putting together a portfolio of covered bad loans, worth roughly P10 billion, to sell to interested investors.

He said the bank would enter into a negotiated sale, possibly with one of those that had earlier expressed interest in buying the bank's real and other property owned or acquired.

These include US-based investment firms Goldman Sachs, Lehmann Brothers and Merrill Lynch.

BPI also planned to sell P3 billion worth of foreclosed assets next year following the disposal of some P2 billion worth of assets this year, Loinaz said.

He also disclosed that BPI would likely end the year a little short of its profit target of P5.5 billion, but still over the profit last year of P5.2 billion.

In a briefing yesterday, BPI senior executive vice president Aurelio Montinola III said the bank's profit this year came primarily from lower operating costs as the bank's total manpower fell 4 percent to 10,500 employees from 11,000 while branch operation costs fell 4 percent following the transformation of a substantial number of branches into smaller, less manpower-intensive kiosks.

Montinola added that the bank likewise benefited this year from the bigger income contribution from its insurance companies.

He said the life, non-life and reinsurance units provided the bank with over P400 million in income.

He also said that the bank's non-performing loan ratio fell to 8.2 percent from 9.8 percent as of the end of last year.

On the negative side, Montinola pointed out that BPI's net interest income this year had been eroded by over P500 million in payments for the expanded value added tax that was implemented this year to replace the gross receipts tax.

BPI also paid over P100 million as part of an industry settlement with the Bureau of Internal Revenue over the underpayment of GRT.

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MITSUBISHI MOTORS

The Officials and Employees
# of the
Department of Labor and Employment,
its Bureaus, Services, and Offices
express their deep sorrow and
mourn the passing of

BLAS FAJARDO OPLE

Former Secretary, 1967-71; 1972-86

on December 14, 2003 at the age of 76.

The Officers and Employees of the
Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
(Formerly National Manpower and Youth Council)
deeply mourn the passing of its
Former Chairman (1969-1986) Sec. Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express their condolences to his family.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Officers and Employees of the
National Labor Relations Commission
grieve the passing of its
Former Chairman (1974-1986) Sec. Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and join the nation in expressing
condolences to his family.

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Officers and Employees of the
Employees Compensation Commission
deeply mourn the passing of its
Former Chairman (1975-1986) Sec. Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express
their condolences to his family.

EMPLOYEES COMPENSATION COMMISSION

The Officers and Employees of the
National Maritime Polytechnic
deeply mourn the passing of its
Former Chairman (1978-1986) Sec. Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and join his
family during their hour of bereavement.

NATIONAL MARITIME POLYTECHNIC

The Officers and Employees of the
Overseas Workers Welfare Administration
(Formerly WelfareFund for Overseas Workers)
deeply mourn the passing of its
Former Chairman (1982-1986) Sec. Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express their condolences to his family.

OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

The Officers and Employees of the
Philippine Overseas Employment Administration
(Formerly OEDB, NSB, and BES)
express great sorrow on the untimely demise of
its First Chairman of the Board Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and join his family during their hour of bereavement.

PHILIPPINE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT ADMINISTRATION

The Officers and Employees of the
National Wages and Productivity Commission
(Formerly National Wages Commission)
deeply grieve the passing of its
Former Chairman (1980-1986) Sec. Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express their condolences to his family.

NATIONAL WAGES AND PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

The Members of the **Maritime Training Council**
and the Officers and Staff of the Council Secretariat
deeply mourn the passing of its
First Chairman (1984-1986) Sec. Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express
their condolences to his family.

MARITIME TRAINING COUNCIL

The Officers and Employees of the
Occupational Safety and Health Center
deeply mourn the passing of
Former Labor Secretary Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express
their condolences to his family.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CENTER

The Officers and Employees of the
National Conciliation and Mediation Board
deeply mourn the passing of
Former Labor Secretary Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express
their condolences to his family.

NATIONAL CONCILIATION AND MEDIATION BOARD

INSTITUTE FOR LABOR STUDIES

The Officers and Employees of the **Institute for Labor Studies**
(Formerly Institute of Labor and Manpower Studies)
deeply mourn the passing of
Former Labor Secretary Blas F. Ople
on December 14, 2003, and express their condolences to his family.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 16, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	2,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.25	17	17	16,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46	46.5	46	46.5	202,800
China Banking Corp.	660	665	660	660	83,180
Citystate Savings Bank	15	15	15	15	2,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	34	33	34	118,100
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	1,100,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27	26.5	26.5	298,900
Philippine National Bank	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	1,000
Security Bank Corp.	16	16	15.5	16	26,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	25	25	25	25	1,700
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.22	21,000
First Abacus Financial	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	200,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1705	1705	1705	1705	130
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	200	230	200	230	1,010
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1320	1320	1310	1310	1,250
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25	25	25	6,800
Globe Telecom Inc.	795	800	790	795	35,630
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.043	0.044	0.043	0.044	1,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.041	0.041	0.04	0.041	1,300,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.87	0.89	0.87	0.89	23,130,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	900	905	900	900	142,760
Ivantage Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	30,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	4,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.75	14.5	14.75	14,200
Manila Electric Co. B	24.25	24.25	23.75	23.75	2,745,800
Petron Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.16	2.2	2,143,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	50,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	70,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.26	1.3	2,959,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.25	428,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	1,100,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	110,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	8,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	56,500
RFM Corp.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	210,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54.5	54	54.5	76,600
San Miguel Corp. B	63	63.5	63	63	127,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	400,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	6,482,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	1,051,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.84	0.86	0.84	0.86	20,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.7	1.7	25,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	500,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.47	2,050,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.115	0.12	0.115	0.12	90,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	200,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	1,800,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	11,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	18.5	18.5	18	18	105,600
Global Equities Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
House Of Investments Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	9,280,000
Ionics Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.48	1.5	491,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.06	814,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	1,070,000
Music Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	200,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.09	0.12	0.09	0.12	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	150,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	10,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Chemical Ind. of the Phil	45	45	45	45	20,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	12,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	200,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	140,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bollo Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	600,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	200,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	30,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	25	25	25	25	812,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	6.1	5.7	6.1	15,973,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.205	0.22	0.205	0.22	80,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	35,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	160,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.16	0.16	900,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	1,100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,117,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	3,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	6,568,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	220,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	2,750,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	1,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	8,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	830,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	20,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	242,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	2,075,670	79,840,830.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	68,777,490	336,019,500.00
PRO	26,136,000	139,806,980.00
Mining	12,800,000	1,248,300.00
OIL	262,700,000	954,400.00
GRAND TOTALS :	372,489,160	557,870,010.00

AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	434.35	UP 1.99
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,098.78	DOWN 4.58
PRO	568.44	UP 11.35
Mining	1,625.06	UP 15.80
OIL	1.23	UNCH 0.00
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	847.29	DOWN 7.94
Composite	1,399.43	UP 4.20

NO. OF ADVANCES: 19; NO. OF DECLINES: 26; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 44; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 89; NO. OF TRADES: 1,559

DISCLOSURES

THE BOARD of Philippine Stock Exchange Inc. declared a cash dividend of P2 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Jan. 7 and will be payable the following day.

* * *

GERARD Brimo retired as chair and chief executive officer of **Philex Mining Corp.** Walter Brown was appointed to replace Brimo. He will also be the acting president pending the appointment of a new president. Leonardo Josef retired as senior vice president for operations while Eulalio Austin was appointed vice president and resident manager for Padcal operations.

* * *

METROPOLITAN Bank and Trust Co. declared a cash dividend of 2 percent based on the bank's outstanding capital.

* * *

SALCON Power Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Jan. 14, 10 a.m. at the Manila Polo Club, Makati City. Only stockholders of record as of Nov. 30 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SEIICHI FUKAMI, president and chair of Matsushita Electric Philippines Corp. acquired one share of stock of the company.

* * *

EURO-MED Laboratories Philippines Inc. declared a 10-percent stock dividend equivalent to P200 million.

* * *

JARDINE Davies Inc. sold over 84 million of its shares in Hawaiian-Philippine Company to Marina Trading Corp. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

Jardine sells sugar unit to CADP group

By Doris C. Dumlao

HOLDING firm Jardine Davies Inc. has sealed a P561-million deal to sell its controlling stake in sugar mill Hawaiian-Philippine Co. to a company owned by the CADP sugar group and some private investors.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, JDI said it had signed the agreement to sell 84.2 million common shares of HPC to Marina Trading Corp., which is owned by Central Azucarera de Don Pedro and some private investors, including some JDI executives.

The shares divested represented almost a 99-percent interest in the sugar mill.

CADP is a subsidiary of another listed firm, Roxas Holdings Inc., which was recently transformed into a holding and investment company. CADP owns Central Azucarera dela Carlota Inc., which operates the La Carlota and Negros Occidental sugar mill operations of the Roxas group.

This transaction completed JDI's divestment from the sugar business. Last year, it also sold its 20.8-percent stake in Bogo-Medellin Milling Co. These divested sugar interests accounted for about 6 percent of total Philippine sugar production.

JDI, a conglomerate which is part of the Jardine Matheson multinational group, earlier announced that it would also fold up its building solutions unit starting January to focus on the agro-chemicals business.

Jardine Buildings Solutions supplies and installs building and industrial products, particularly thermal insulation or refractories. It offers refractory and insulation packages specializing in the cement, iron, steel and petrochemical fields to help companies reduce maintenance and energy costs.

CURRENCIES

December 16, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.812744	1.000000	55.456000
Japan	Yen	0.007549	0.009288	0.515100
United Kingdom	Pound	1.419213	1.746200	96.837300
Hongkong	Dollar	0.104698	0.128821	7.143900
Switzerland	Franc	0.644319	0.792770	43.963900
Canada	Dollar	0.619328	0.762021	42.258600
Singapore	Dollar	0.475650	0.585240	32.455100
Australia	Dollar	0.603956	0.743108	41.209800
Bahrain	Dinar'	2.155934	2.652661	147.106000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.216732	0.266667	14.788300
Brunei	Dollar	0.474263	0.583533	32.360400
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020508	0.025233	1.399300
UAE	Dirham	0.221300	0.272287	15.099900
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.230400	68.233100
Argentina	Peso	0.274576	0.337838	18.735100
Brazil	Real	0.278623	0.342818	19.011300
Denmark	Kroner	0.134418	0.165388	9.171800
India	Rupee	0.017882	0.022002	1.220100
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.213908	0.263193	14.595600
Mexico	New Peso	0.072007	0.088598	4.913300
New Zealand	Dollar	0.527071	0.648508	35.963700
Norway	Kroner	0.121566	0.149575	8.294800
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014234	0.017513	0.971200
South Africa	Rand	0.128904	0.158604	8.795500
Korea	Won	0.000688	0.000846	0.046900
Sweden	Kroner	0.110947	0.136509	7.570200
Syria	Pound	0.018522	0.022789	1.263800
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023947	0.029464	1.634000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000510	0.000627	0.034800

It would be a pity if you didn't look at the Lange 1 movement with a magnifying glass.

But you certainly don't need one to read its patented outsize date.

The Lange 1's balance-cock.
Lange's inimitable watchmaking skill in magnification: free-hand cutting by a master engraver makes every balance-cock unmistakably unique, and the patented whiplash precision index adjuster combines the aesthetic beauty of superb craftsmanship with Lange's watchmaking ingenuity. The result is technical and artistic perfection of a degree which can only be found in Lange watches.
The balance-cock full size:

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One of mechanical watchmaking's most strikingly useful inventions allows for a date display three times the size of those on conventional wristwatches. The patented double-disc mechanism with over 40 individual components may be the most significant contemporary watchmaking innovation. This mechanism, and the distinctive twin mainspring barrels for three day's power reserve with indicator, makes for an unprecedented watchmaking masterpiece. The Lange 1 is available in 18-carat gold or in platinum.

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Physical (on natural basis)	<10 MM	:	95%
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1,200,000 tons for 2004

Interested parties may call Tel. Nos. 631-9744 /3407 / 9017 or 637-2727 and look for Ms. Carmi or Mr. Sy.

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ROSITO C. PRESENTACION was extrajudicially settled by the heirs as per Doc. No.1036, Page# 208, Book# XI Series of 2003 by Notary Public Federico de Jesus of Tabaco City.
(PDI- Dec. 17, 24 &31,2003)

Notice is hereby given that the Estate of the late Sps. Maximino Fariscal & Desideria B. Fariscal was extrajudicially settled by the heirs as per Doc#475 Page#95 Book#IV series of 2003 by Notary Public Atty. Cesario E. Buscano of Makati City MM.
(PDI-Dec. 3, 10 & 17, 2003)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT OF MANILA
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION

OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF COURT
& EX-OFICIO SHERIFF

Foreclosure No. 03-2040

NOTICE OF EXTRA-JUDICIAL SALE

Upon extra-judicial petition for sale under Act 3135 as amended in relation to Section 20 of RA No. 4726, otherwise known as the Condominium Act, filed on October 23, 2003 by GOTESCO REGENCY TWIN TOWERS CONDOMINIUM CORP., Petitioner, with postal address at Ground Flr., GRTTCC, 1129 Concepcion St., Ermita, Manila, against GMCC UNITED DEVELOPMENT CORP., Respondent, with postal address at Unit 701-C Tower 3, Gotesco Regency Twin Towers, Concepcion St., Ermita, Manila in order to satisfy the obligation of the respondent to the petitioner in the amount of P263,218.39 as of October 22, 2003 inclusive of penalty charges plus litigation expenses, sheriff's fees and other charges, the undersigned Clerk of Court & Ex-Oficio Sheriff of Manila thru her deputy, will sell at public auction to the highest bidder for CASH and in Philippine Currency on December 29, 2003 at 10:00 AM or soon thereafter at the Office of the Clerk of Court & Ex-Oficio Sheriff of Manila, 4th Floor, City Hall Bldg., Manila, the real property mentioned hereunder including improvements existing thereon, to wit:

CONDOMINIUM CERTIFICATE OF TITLE
NO. 11384

"SEVENTH FLOOR-TOWER 3 — UNIT 701 containing an area of 142.73 sq. meters, consisting of Living Room, Three (3) Bedrooms, Three (3) Toilets & Baths, Kitchen, Maid's Quarter, Foyer, Balcony and Laundry Area, (GOTESCO REGENCY TWIN TOWERS RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUM)."

Prospective buyers or bidders are hereby enjoined to investigate and verify for themselves the title to said property and the encumbrances thereon, if any there be.

Manila, Philippines, November 12, 2003.

(Sgd.) JENNIFER H. DELA CRUZ-BUENDIA
Clerk of Court
& Ex-Oficio Sheriff

(Sgd.) CARLOS Q. BARREDO
Sheriff In-charge

(PDI-Dec. 10, 17 & 24, 2003)

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

dti
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY
PHILIPPINES

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of **NORTH COVE FISHERIES, INC.** with office address at Mz6 Prince Tower #14 Tordesillas Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as New Export Producer of Processed Crabmeat at a capacity of 68,796 kilograms per year with plant site at Purok Talisay B, Kawit District, Pagadian City has been officially accepted on December 03, 2003 and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication

Issued this 3rd day of December 2003.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI-December 17, 2003)

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Event Details:
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Venue: Regus Palawan Room, Tower 2, The Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Ave. cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

Hurry! Limited seats available.
To register you may contact:
A. Rogue Media, Incorporated (look for Angie Tan)
Tel: [illegible]
Telefax: [illegible]
Address: 1706 Cityland Herrera Tower, 98 Herrera corner Valero Streets Salcedo Village Makati City, 1227, Philippines

B. Salesman's Centre, Incorporated (look for Nathan Garing)
Tel: [illegible]
Address: Suite 2004 Wilshire Plaza, 11 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, 1502, Philippines

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DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

CEBU CITY

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NOTICE OF SALE

Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 2601 and 2607 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, as well as CMO No. 5-2003, there will be a Public Auction Sale to be conducted at the PORT OF CEBU on 22 December 2003 at 9:00 A.M. of the hereunder articles. Said goods shall be available for public viewing on December 18, 2003. For further inquiry, please contact the following telephone numbers 032-2561690 or 032-2561697.

In the event of a failed bidding for want of bidders or lack of an acceptable bid there shall be a 2nd bidding on the next business day.

Articles	Consignee	Floor Price
a) 17,080 bags of Vietnam Rice as is where is	Various	P1,500.00/bag
b) Two (2) Trolley Bags of Jewelries; subject of CC No. 2000-12 (CIA S.I. No. 15-99)	Liz Marieble Tan and Gina Yap	P22,146,284.39

Requirements for participating bidders:

1) Php2,000.00 registration fee; and
2) Cash bond deposit of P20,000.00 either in cash or manager's check refundable to the losing bidders after closing of the auction sale.
3) Bidders for rice must be licensed NFA retailers/wholesaler.

Registration fee and cash bond deposits are payable one (1) day before the date of actual bidding.

Port of Cebu, Philippines, 15 December 2003.

(Sgd.) COLL. BILLY C. BIBIT
District Collector

(PDI-Dec. 17, 2003)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Geothermal Generation
Bac-Man Geothermal Power Plant Complex
Palayan Bayan, Manito, Albay

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

PR# 3BAC-03-0820/ PB-03-0761 – Refilling of Hydrogen Cylinders and Carbon Dioxide Cylinders

Cost Estimate	P1,344,000.00
Bidding Date	December 22, 2003 2:00 PM BMGPPC Conference Room

PR# 3BAC-03-0705/ PB-03-0678 – Supply of spareparts including materials needed in the assembly of mechanical gas extractor gearbox and impellers type GX225/3 of Unit No. 2

Cost Estimate	P7.8M
Pre-Bid Conference	December 18, 2003 / 9:00 AM
Bidding Date	December 22, 2003 2:00 PM BMGPPC Conference Room

Interested parties are invited to pre-qualify and to submit sealed bids on the above to be opened in a public bidding at the BMGPPC Conference Room, Palayan, Bayan, Manito, Albay.

Accreditation forms and bidding documents can be obtained from Mondays thru Fridays at the Procurement Services, Ground Floor, Bacman Geothermal Power Plant Complex.

(Sgd.) ROLANDO E. CAWALING
Division Mgr., Admin/Finance

(PDI-Dec. 12, 13, 15 & 17, 2003)

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Marketing Manager
– preferably with experience and familiarity with hospital's organization

Sterilizer Operator
– must be a Mechanical Engineer

Boiler Operator
– 3 years experience in this field is required

Driver
– must be familiar with Metro Manila roads and/or Cebu City & Cebu provinces roads

Collector
– must be able to put up security guaranty bond

Interested parties may send their resumé before end of Jan. 2004 at 1003 Antel Global, Julia Vargas Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600 attention to Mr. John.

Republic of the Philippines
City of Sorsogon

OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR

WANTED RURAL HEALTH PHYSICIAN

The City Government of Sorsogon is in need of a ***Rural Health Physician*** for the Sorsogon City Amberg Hospital.

COMPENSATION PACKAGE

- **Basic Salary – (Php 18,000 per month)**
- **Free Board and Lodging**
- **Renewal of Contract every six (6) months**

Interested applicants are required to fax/send their Personal Data Sheet (CSC Revised Form 212). Resumé or Curriculum Vitae with cover letter and pertinent documents to:

Mayor Sally A. Lee
c/o Ms. Asia Olbes
Office of the City Mayor
2/F Shopping Center Sorsogon
Fax No. (056) 211-7950

For details, call: (056) 211-1314 Dr. Lee / (056) 211-4669 Dr. Garcia
Note: Please confirm your desire within fifteen (15) days upon publication.

HEADQUARTERS
PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY
Fort del Pilar, Baguio City

INVITATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Military Academy is inviting interested manufacturers/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of the Initial Clothing Allowance (ICA) and Combat Clothing and Individual Equipment (CCIE) of PMA Class 2008.

Bid documents can be secured from the Academy Procurement Office, Gen. Lim Hall, Fort del Pilar, Baguio City and PMA Liaison Office, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City during office hours.

A pre-bidding conference is scheduled on December 16, 2003 at 9:00 AM at the PMA Liaison Office, Camp General Aguinaldo, Quezon City. ICA and CCIE samples/specifications and bid documents as well as instructions to bidders will be presented during the conference. Opening of bids will be on December 19, 2003 at 13:00 PM.

For particulars, please contact the Secretariat BAC at PMA Procurement Office, Fort del Pilar, Baguio City (074-447-3886) PILTEL.

(PDI-Dec. 11 & 17, 2003)

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OBITUARIES

*"Only goodness and love will pursue me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come…" **Psalm 23:6***

Our Dearly Beloved

VERNA VIRAY MEDINA

Peacefully joined her Creator on December 15, 2003 at the age of 49.

Her loving husband **Rolando**; parents **Rodolfo** and **Engracia**; sister **Edna**; brothers **Raoul, Renato** and **Anthony**; children and in-laws **Karen** and **Joseph Mesa, Katherine** and **Robert Silva, Emmanuel**; grandchildren **Nichelle, Nathan, Kaxandra** and **Raymond**; and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 20, 2003 after a 10:00 a.m. Mass at the Heritage Park, Taguig.

ANTONIO ONG HAW CHU

Joined his Creator on December 14, 2003 at the age of 80.

His bereaved wife **Socorro**; children and in-laws **Robert** and **Lulu, Noli** and **Baby, Eddie** and **MaryAnn, Vivian** and **Hubert, Jerry** (†), **Debbie** and **Eddie, Nanette** (†), **Ronald** and **Jean, Arleen, Joy** and **Oscar**; his grandchildren and relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Chapel 5, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Friday, December 19, 2003, 9:30 a.m. at the Chinese Cemetery.

The Board of Directors, Officers and Staff

of

IMUS RURAL BANK, INC.
Imus, Cavite

mourn the passing away of

JOHN VINCENT "BIBO" DELFIN VILLANUEVA

Board of Director and Officer 1997-2003

On December 13, 2003 at the age of 38.

We join his wife, **Ma. Elena M. Villanueva**; children, **Ma Chalos Pearl** and **John Alben**; his father, **Atty. Eugenio V. Villanueva, Jr.** and mother **Perla Delfin Villanueva**; siblings **Lawrence, Jesus, Catalina Susan, Hugo, Raymund** and **Susan Pearl**; relatives and friends in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Royal Chapel of Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 20, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after the 9 a.m. Holy Mass at the Presentacion of Child Jesus Parish, BF Homes, Parañaque City.

We design OBITUARIES for free.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:39

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OBITUARIES

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12:00 noon
Day before publication

BLAS FAJARDO OPLE

Secretary of Foreign Affairs; Former Senate President;
Former Member, 1987 Constitutional Commission;
President, 60th International Labor Organization Conference;
Former Secretary of Labor; Writer; Newspaperman;
and World War II Veteran

Died in the grace of our Lord on December 14, 2003 at the age of 76.

His bereaved wife, **Susana**; children **Luis**, **Blas Jr.**, **Raul**, **Dalisay**, **Felix**, **Dionisio**, and **Ma. Susana**; brothers **Benigno** and **Bernardo**; sister **Anatolia**; sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, other relatives, and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body will lie in state at the Christ the King Church on Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City.

Necrological services will be held at the Senate of the Philippines today, December 17, 2003 at 10:00 AM; at the Department of Foreign Affairs at 1:30 PM and 3:30 PM to be rendered by the Writers' Group, the Department of Labor and Employment, and other Labor Groups; and on Thursday at 9:00 AM by the Department of Foreign Affairs before his body is brought to his native town of Hagonoy.

Interment will be at 12:00 noon on Sunday, December 21, 2003, at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

The Partners, Associates & Staff of
DULAY PAGUNSAN & TY LAW OFFICES
mourns the passing of its **Founding Partner**

ATTY. MANUEL BORROMEO DULAY

who peacefully joined the Lord on 13 December 2003 at the age of 75.

His beloved wife CORDING; his children CORA and WAHJUDI, GERRY, TEDDY and DAISY, and DODO and EPETY; his grandchildren NICO, SAM, TIM, DEAN, BUDGIE, JAUME, and JOHN; his brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, 18 December 2003, at the La Loma Catholic Cemetery, Caloocan City, Metro Manila.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down the green pastures.
He leads me beside the still waters.
He restores my soul. Psalm 23:1-2

MYRNA SABIO KABAMALAN

of Kalayaan, Laguna

Her beloved husband **Gerardo**; sister **Emma**; brother **Edward**; children **Malu**, **Bov** & **Gilda**, **Cirio**, **Mae (†)**, **Gaius** & **Marcy**, **Chinky** & **John**, & **Weny**; grandchildren **Mark**, **Paelo**, **Gabriel**, **Popop**, **Isabella**, **Daniel**, **Tommy**, **Alo** & **Nicnic**; relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at 145 Real St., Kalayaan, Laguna.

Interment will be on Sunday, December 21, 2003 at Kalayaan Municipal Cemetery, Kalayaan, Laguna after the 8 am Mass.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

ROSAURO BELTRAN CAJUCOM

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 8, 2003

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

CESAR AGUILAR DE GUZMAN

Administrator, Academia De San Nicolas
(formerly: E.R.G. Memorial College/Arellano Memorial College)
Leoño St., Tañong, Malabon City

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 13, 2003 at the age of 64.

His bereaved wife Aurea; children Jennie & Kenny, Perry & Lyn, Jojo; grandchildren Cleng, Cedric, Chase, KJ, Kyle, Kris; brother Milian; sister Meding; nephews, nieces & other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state in the school campus, Academia de San Nicolas, Leoño St., Tañong, Malabon City. Cremation will follow after the blessing at 10:00 a.m. on December 21.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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1 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2 THE GRUDGE
3 ALIPIN
4 MR. SUAVE
5 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
6 LOST ISLAND
7 CABIN FEVER
8 MYSTIC RIVER

SM CITY CEBU
2313636

1 DARK BLUE
2 RUGRATS GO WILD
3 SCARY MOVIE 3
4 GOOD BOY!
5 ELF
6 ZHO YU'S TRAIN
7 THE GRUDGE
8 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM CITY BACOOR
4173068

1 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 CABIN FEVER
4 LOST ISLAND
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
6 MR. SUAVE
7 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
8 STAR RUNNER

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7120015

1 MYSTIC RIVER
2 RUGRATS GO WILD
3 CABIN FEVER
4 AKO, SIYA O IKAW
5 GOOD BOY!
6 STAR RUNNER

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2 LOST ISLAND
3 THE GRUDGE
4 BIKTIMA

SM BICUTAN
7763055

1 THE SPY
2 ASBOOBS
3 THE GRUDGE
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM CITY MARILAO

1 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2 SEX SCANDAL
3 CABIN FEVER
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM STA. MESA
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1 P.E.T.A.
2 CABIN FEVER
3 MASTER & COMMANDER
4 BIKTIMA
5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
6 ANG TANGING INA
7 LOST ISLAND
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
9 WISHMASTER 4
10 MR. SUAVE

SM SOUTHMALL
8066088

1 MAGDALENE SISTERS
2 CABIN FEVER
3 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
4 TALK TO HER
5 INTERNET QUEEN
6 ALIPIN
7 MR. SUAVE
8 LOST ISLAND
9 THE GRUDGE
10 BIKTIMA

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9300749

1 LOST ISLAND
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 ALIPIN
4 MYSTIC RIVER
5 MR. SUAVE
6 THE GRUDGE
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
8 CABIN FEVER
9 CHAVIT SINGSON
10 BIKTIMA
11 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
12 INTERNET QUEEN

SM CITY DAVAO
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1 STAR RUNNER
2 WRONG TURN
3 ELF
4 SCARY MOVIE 3
5 GOOD BOY!
6 THE PHONE

SM CITY LUCENA
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1 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
4 STAR RUNNER

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4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
6 MYSTIC RIVER
7 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
8 ELF
9 THE GRUDGE
10 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
11 LOST ISLAND
12 LIBERATED

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1 CABIN FEVER
2 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3 MR. SUAVE
4 LOST ISLAND

SM CITY ILOILO
3209432

1 RUGRATS GO WILD
2 RESERVED
3 STAR RUNNER
4 COLD CREEK MANOR
5 OUT OF TIME
6 SCARY MOVIE 3
7 RESERVED
8 ELF

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 CABIN FEVER
2 ELF
3 LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 LOST ISLAND
6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
7 BIKTIMA
8 JEANNIE, BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
9 ANG TANGING INA
10 SCARY MOVIE 3
11 INTERNET QUEEN
12 THE GRUDGE

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8590084

1 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2 COLD CREEK MANOR
3 ELF
4 OUT OF TIME

SM CITY BAGUIO
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1 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
2 OUT OF TIME
3 SCARY MOVIE 3
4 FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS

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1 MASTER & COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD
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2 LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS
12:00 FS/12:30 MF/4:00/7:30/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/2:00 END

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1 OUT OF TIME 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:55
4 MYSTIC RIVER 10:50, 1:35, 4:20, 7:05, 9:55
2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:40
5 CABIN FEVER 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 RUGRATS GO WILD 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
6 GOOD BOY 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
7 INTERNET QUEEN 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
9 THE GRUDGE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
10 ELF 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

MATINEE PRICE: P100 THX cinema / P75 1level cinemas
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Ermita
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536-7809 to 12

1 MYSTIC RIVER - 11:20, 2:10, 4:55, 7:40, 10:00
2 ELF - 10:10, 12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:00, 9:50
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 RUGRATS GO WILD - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 GOOD BOY - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
6 CABIN FEVER - 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

Metro East
Marcos hway
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682-8280

1 LOONEY TUNES
2 RUGRATS GO WILD
3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4 GOOD BOY
5 CABIN FEVER
6 MYSTIC RIVER
7 ELF
8 JEEPERS CREEPERS

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1 RUGRATS GO WILD
2 MYSTIC RIVER
3 GOOD BOY
4 CABIN FEVER
5 THE GRUDGE
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS
7 SCARY MOVIE 3
8 INTERNET QUEEN

Malabon 288-0985/2575		Cainta 240-4661
INTERNET QUEEN	1	MYSTIC RIVER
ALIPIN	2	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
CABIN FEVER	3	ALIPIN
JEEPERS CREEPERS	4	CABIN FEVER

Sta. Rosa (049)837-0907		Lipa, Batangas (043)757-3664/312-5870
OUT OF TIME	1	OUT OF TIME
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	2	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
STAR RUNNER	3	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
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INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	5	INNER SENSES

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BABAE SA BREAKWATER	2	RUGRATS GO WILD
OUT OF TIME	3	ALIPIN
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	4	CABIN FEVER
COLD CREEK MANOR	5	ELF
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2	6	STAR RUNNER

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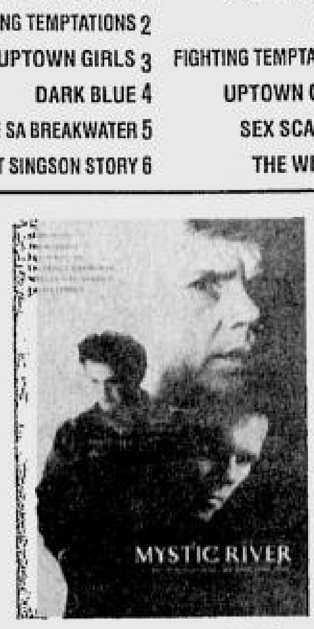
SCARY MOVIE 3	1	SCARY MOVIE 3
FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS	2	GIGLI
UPTOWN GIRLS	3	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
DARK BLUE	4	UPTOWN GIRLS
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	5	SEX SCANDAL
CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	6	THE WISHER



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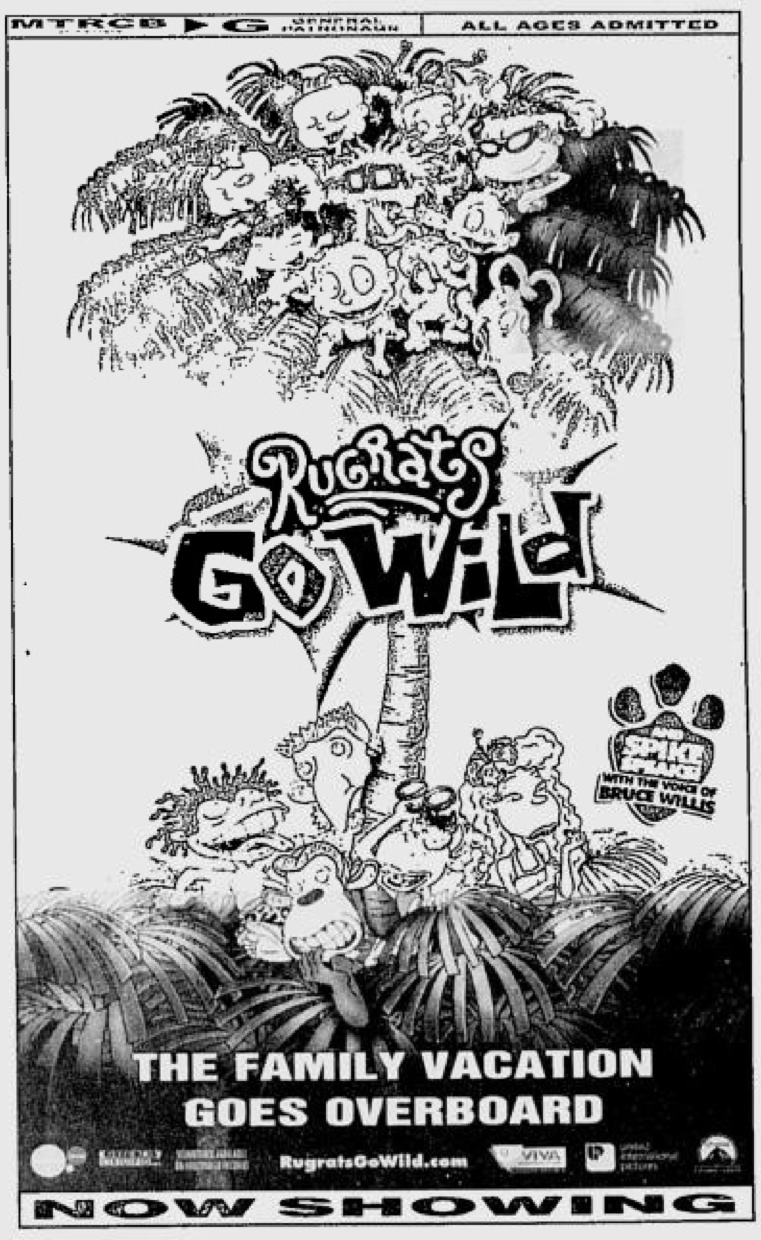

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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

LOST ISLAND R18 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00	ELF GP 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40	MYSTIC RIVER R13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY PG13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	RUGRATS GO WILD GP 1:20, 2:10, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00	LORD OF THE RINGS 2 "TWO TOWERS" GP 11:30, 2:30

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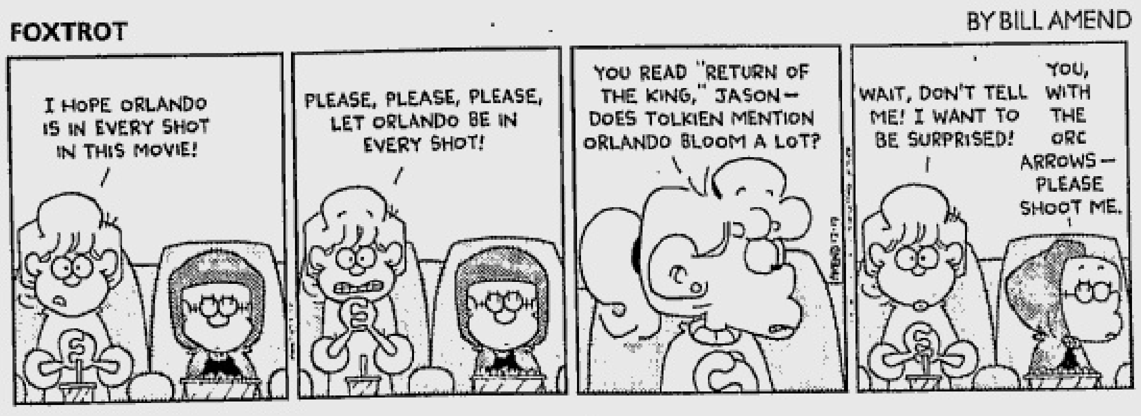
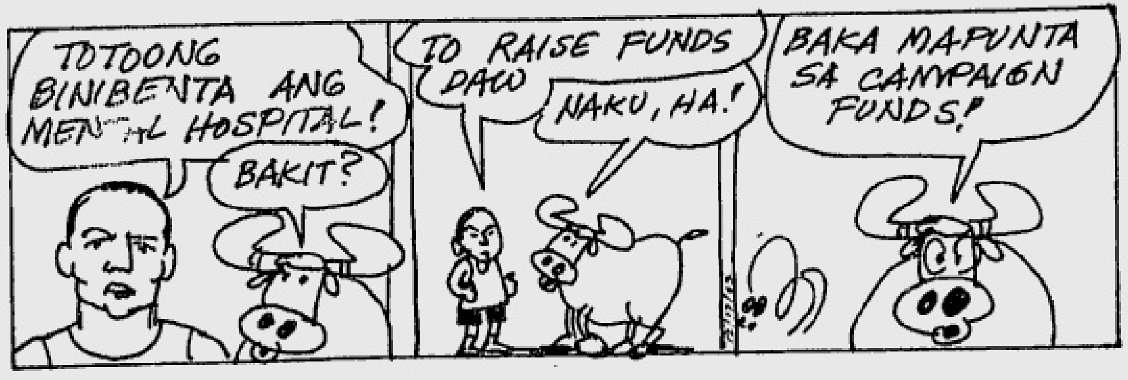
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I HOPE ORLANDO IS IN EVERY SHOT IN THIS MOVIE!
PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, LET ORLANDO BE IN EVERY SHOT!
YOU READ "RETURN OF THE KING," JASON— DOES TOLKIEN MENTION ORLANDO BLOOM A LOT?
WAIT, DON'T TELL ME! I WANT TO BE SURPRISED!
YOU, WITH THE ORC ARROWS— PLEASE SHOOT ME.

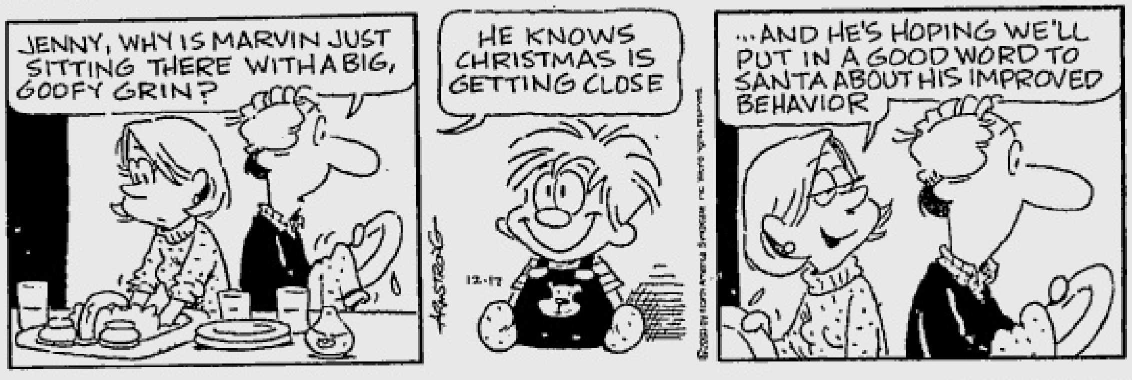
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TOTOONG BINIBENTA ANG MENTAL HOSPITAL!
BAKIT?
TO RAISE FUNDS DAW
NAKU, HA!
BAKA MAPUNTA SA CAMPAIGN FUNDS!

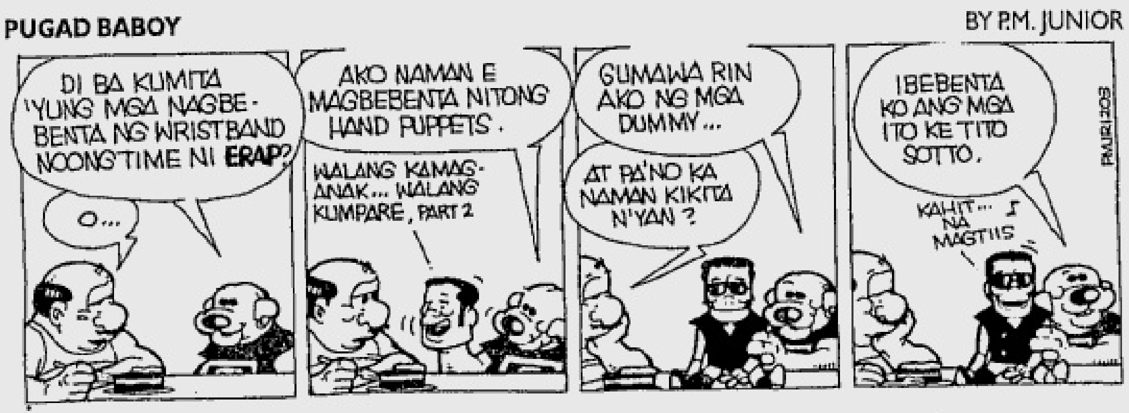
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


JENNY, WHY IS MARVIN JUST SITTING THERE WITH A BIG, GOOFY GRIN?
HE KNOWS CHRISTMAS IS GETTING CLOSE
...AND HE'S HOPING WE'LL PUT IN A GOOD WORD TO SANTA ABOUT HIS IMPROVED BEHAVIOR
12-17

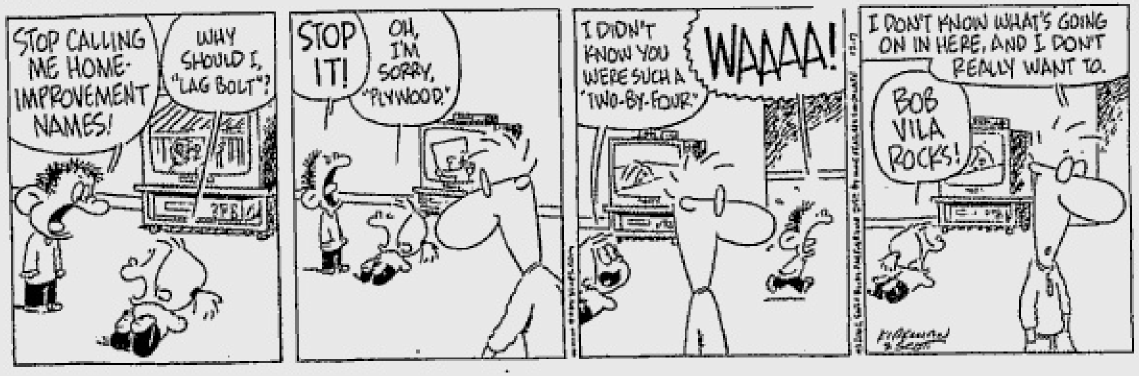
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DI BA KUMITA 'YUNG MGA NAGBEBENTA NG WRISTBAND NOONG TIME NI ERAP?
O...
AKO NAMAN E MAGBEBENTA NITONG HAND PUPPETS.
WALANG KAMAG-ANAK... WALANG KUMPARE, PART 2
GUMAWA RIN AKO NG MGA DUMMY...
AT PA'NO KA NAMAN KIKITA N'YAN?
IBEBENTA KO ANG MGA ITO KE TITO SOTTO.
KAHIT... NA MAGTIIS

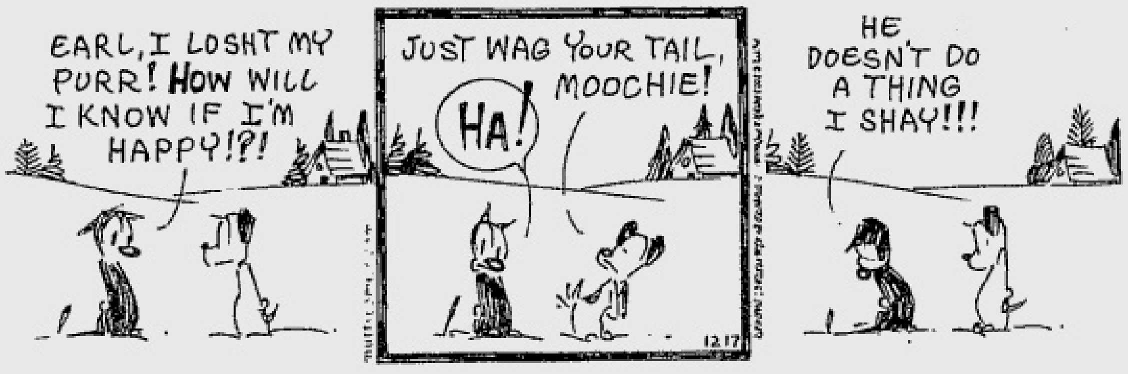
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


STOP CALLING ME HOME-IMPROVEMENT NAMES!
WHY SHOULD I, "LAG BOLT"?
STOP IT!
OH, I'M SORRY, "PLYWOOD."
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SUCH A "TWO-BY-FOUR."
WAAAA!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN HERE, AND I DON'T REALLY WANT TO.
BOB VILA ROCKS!

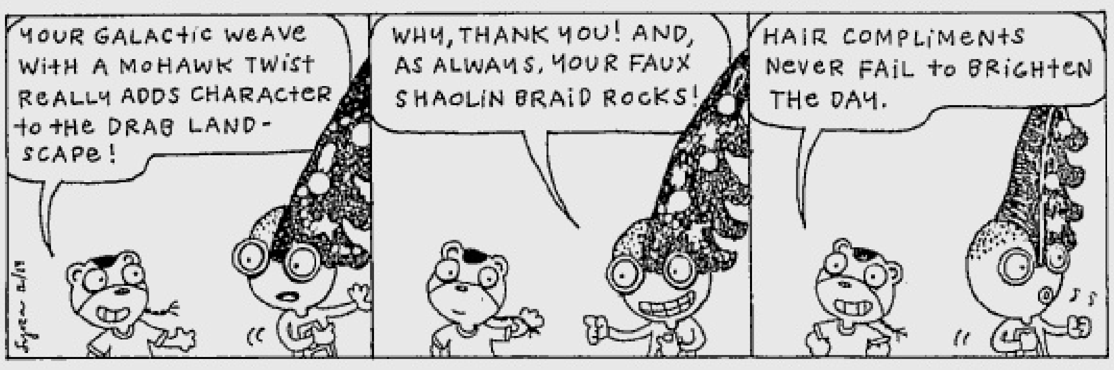
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


EARL, I LOSHT MY PURR! HOW WILL I KNOW IF I'M HAPPY!?!
JUST WAG YOUR TAIL, MOOCHIE!
HA!
HE DOESN'T DO A THING I SHAY!!!
12.17

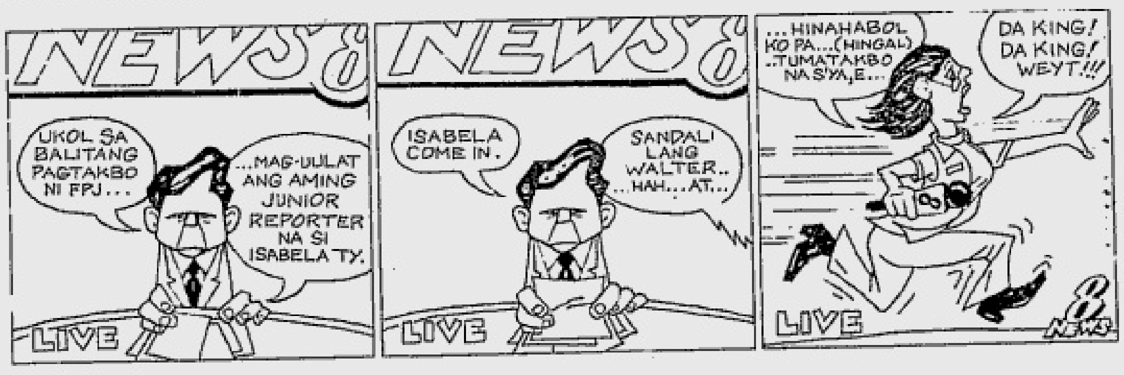
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


YOUR GALACTIC WEAVE WITH A MOHAWK TWIST REALLY ADDS CHARACTER TO THE DRAB LANDSCAPE!
WHY, THANK YOU! AND, AS ALWAYS, YOUR FAUX SHAOLIN BRAID ROCKS!
HAIR COMPLIMENTS NEVER FAIL TO BRIGHTEN THE DAY.

NEWSMARYOSEP

BY RON RUIZ


NEWS 8
UKOL SA BALITANG PAGTAKBO NI FPJ...
...MAG-UULAT ANG AMING JUNIOR REPORTER NA SI ISABELA TY.
LIVE
NEWS 8
ISABELA COME IN.
SANDALI LANG WALTER.. ...HAH... AT...
LIVE
...HINAHABOL KO PA....(HINGAL) ..TUMATAKBO NA S'YA, E...
DA KING! DA KING! WEYT!!!
LIVE
8 NEWS

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You like to have a structured life. You value practical considerations because you yourself are dependable and stable. You are firmly entrenched in the here and now. You are skilled at dealing with your everyday world. The year ahead could be one of the most powerful years of your life. Reach out.
Birthdate of: Giovanni Ribisi, actor; Milla Jovovich, model/actress; Paul Butterfield, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Prepare for delays and shortages connected with publishing, higher education, legal matters and dealing with foreign countries. Travel plans will need rescheduling.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): The month ahead offers you great opportunities to settle disputes about shared property. You might have to deal with old debts or prior obligations.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You can definitely expect to hear from old partners and ex-spouses during the next few weeks. You might as well look your best (living well is the best revenge).

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Expect shortages, delays, confused communications, computer breakdowns and similar headaches at work in the next month. It's as if efficiency has gone right out the window!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Old lovers and old flames are back in your life again (if not now, then probably in the next few weeks). Don't be tempted to go back to something that you know is a dead-end alley.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Family reunions and get-togethers are likely in the month ahead. Possibly, you will hear from someone you haven't seen for a long time.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Truck and automobile repairs are likely in the month ahead. If you think something needs fixing, do it now or you'll be stranded when you least want to be.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Previous job opportunities might suddenly resurface again. That's OK. Happiness is having alternatives. Do whatever suits you best.

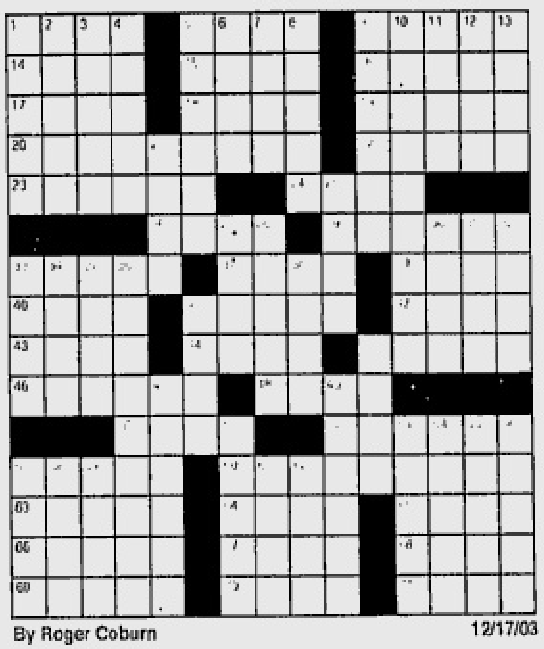
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be patient in the month ahead, because it's sort of like "two steps forward, one step back." You're not losing it; nevertheless, confused communications and misplaced items are inevitable.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your Achilles' heel is your own self-doubt now. Old habits could make you act against your own best interests. It's important that you believe in yourself. (The belief itself is all that matters.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Stock the fridge, because people from your past are coming to town! It will be fun to run into old friends again (unless you owe them money). It's good to talk to people you have history with.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might have to rehash old problems with bosses and parents. Matters that you thought were done and finished with now surface again. And so it goes.

DAILY CROSSWORD



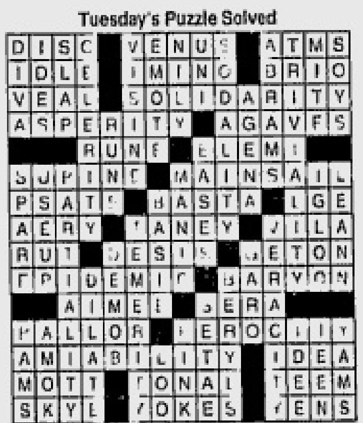
By Roger Coburn
Summerville, GA

12/17/03

ACROSS
1 Gilpin of "Frasier"
5 Pleased
9 Separated
14 George Orwell's alma mater
15 Temper tantrum
16 Male voice
17 Herring's kin
18 Biblical prophet
19 French aunt
20 Veggie sea?
22 Boot out
23 Wacko
24 Maxwell or Lanchester
26 Dog of a movie
29 __ in stone
33 Mystery story?
37 Org.
39 Fork-tailed bird
40 Fillet fish
41 Chanel and others
42 Israel's airline
43 Equal to the task
44 Morales of "La Bamba"
45 Lifted with light fingers
46 Mortar's partner
48 Malayan outrigger
50 Fuel-line element
52 Grumbles
57 Leslie of "Gigi"
60 Veggie sign?
63 Among the quick
64 Theater award
65 Pieces of pelvises
66 Measuring strip
67 More or __
68 Narrow stretch
69 Prayer endings
70 Greek letters
71 Down Under greeting

DOWN
1 "My Cousin Vinny" star
2 Hawke of "Reality Bites"
3 Crowd noises
4 Neighbor of China
5 American diving birds
6 Kick back
7 Taj Mahal site
8 Diplomat Silas
9 Certify
10 Veggie coat?
11 Francis or Frank
12 Sch. mil. org.
13 Transport-loss allowance
21 __ B'rith
25 SLR part
27 New Mexico art colony
28 Org. of songwriters
30 Hawaiian port
31 & others
32 Proofreader's cut
33 Pronto acronym
34 Ear flap
35 Misfortunes
36 Veggie composer?
38 Yves' evening
41 Mediocre grades
45 Delhi dress
47 Hermits
49 Female beast
51 School of Paris
53 Cake covering
54 Powered a punt
55 Author Jong
56 Serpentine
57 Irene of "Fame"
58 College grad
59 Irritate
61 Cover for a crook
62 City on the Arno

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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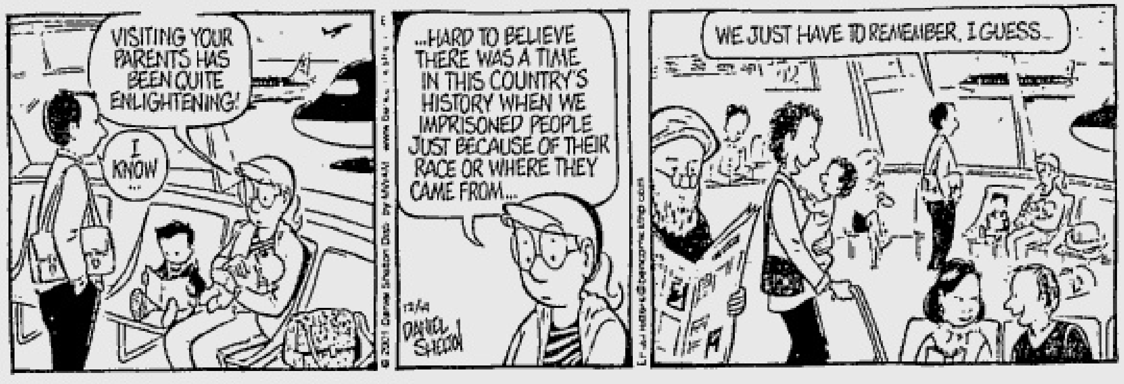
12/17/03

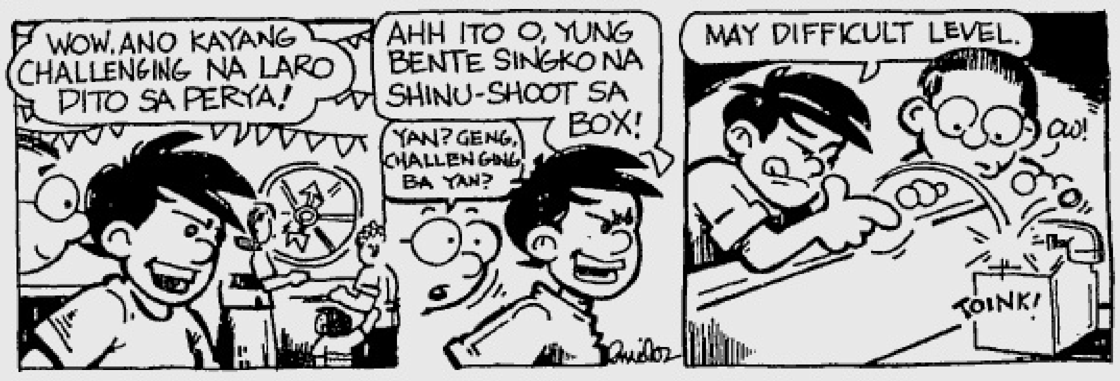
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


VISITING YOUR PARENTS HAS BEEN QUITE ENLIGHTENING!
I KNOW...
...HARD TO BELIEVE THERE WAS A TIME IN THIS COUNTRY'S HISTORY WHEN WE IMPRISONED PEOPLE JUST BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE OR WHERE THEY CAME FROM...
WE JUST HAVE TO REMEMBER, I GUESS...

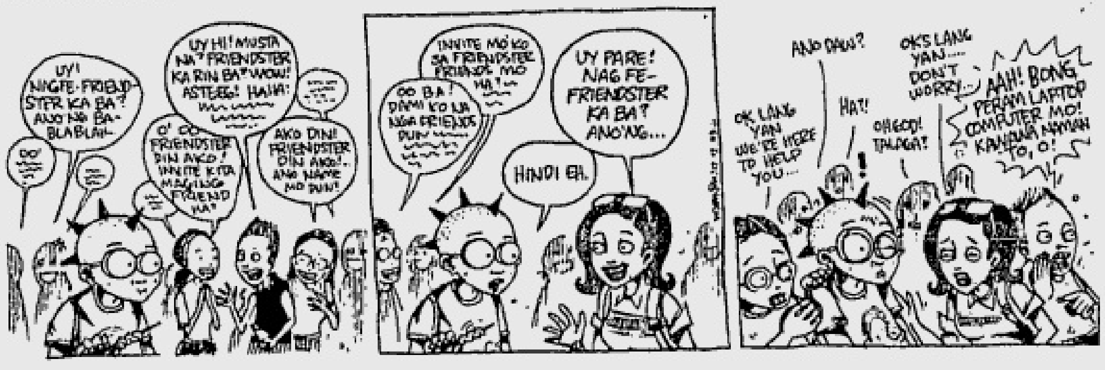
GENG'S GAMES

BY AMIEL RUFO


WOW, ANO KAYANG CHALLENGING NA LARO DITO SA PERYA!
AHH ITO O, YUNG BENTE SINGKO NA SHINU-SHOOT SA BOX!
YAN? GENG, CHALLENGING BA YAN?
MAY DIFFICULT LEVEL.
OO!
TOINK!

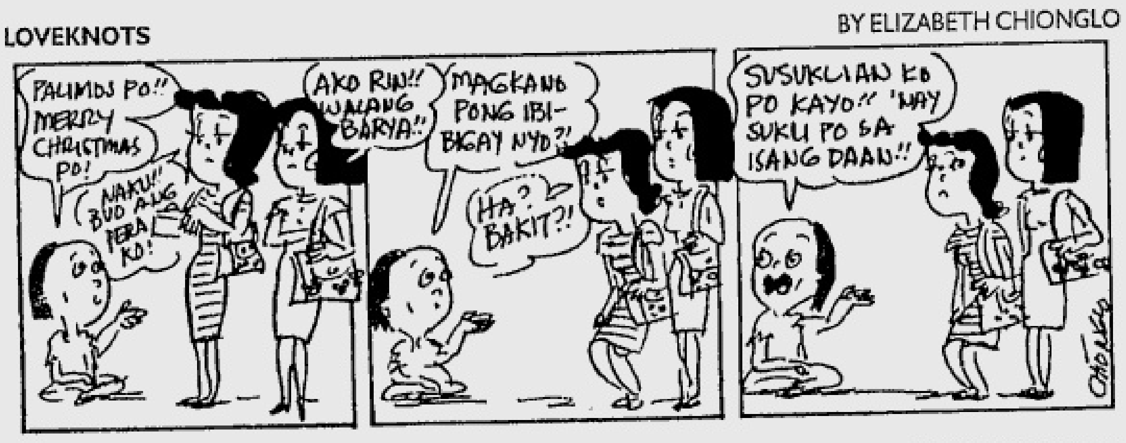
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


UY! NAGFE-FRIENDSTER KA BA? ANO NG BA-BLABLAH-
UY HI! MUSTA NA? FRIENDSTER KA RIN BA? WOW! ASTEEG! HAHA!
O! OO FRIENDSTER DIN AKO! INVITE KITA MAGING FRIEND HA?
AKO DIN! FRIENDSTER DIN AKO!.. ANO NAME MO DUN?
INVITE MO KO SA FRIENDSTER FRIENDS MO HA!
OO BA! DAMI KO NA NGA FRIENDS DUN
UY PARE! NAG FE-FRIENDSTER KA BA? ANO'NG...
HINDI EH.
OK LANG YAN WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU...
ANO DAW?
HA?!
OHGOD! TALAGA?
OKS LANG YAN.... DON'T WORRY...
AAH! BONG PERAM LAPTOP COMPUTER MO! KAWAWA NAMAN TO, O!

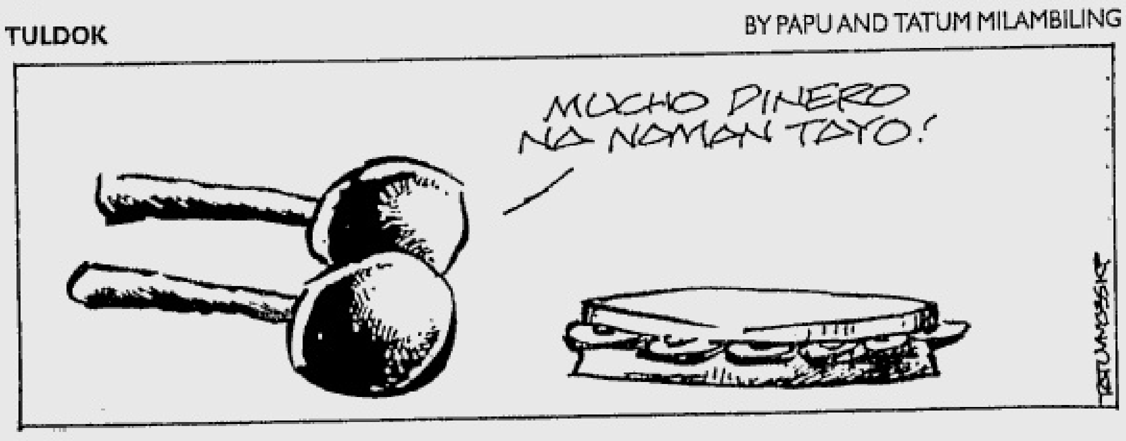
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PALIMOS PO!! MERRY CHRISTMAS PO!
NAKU!! 'BUO ANG PERA KO!
AKO RIN!! WALANG BARYA!!
MAGKANO PONG IBIBIGAY NYO?!
HA? BAKIT?!
SUSUKLIAN KO PO KAYO!! 'NAY SUKLI PO SA ISANG DAAN!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING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DIANE LANE UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

Life offers you a thousand chances ... all you have to do is take one.

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

"A Romantic Winner!" --- E! Online

"Two Thumbs Up!" --- Ebert & Roeper

DIANE LANE
UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

For screening schedule, pls. call 729-7777

Touchstone Pictures

ALL DIGITAL SOUND AYALA CINEMAS PRESENTS

G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 THE GRUDGE	1 MYSTIC RIVER	ArtFilm 1 BALZAC 12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 1 SCARY MOVIE 3 2:50	THX 1 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
2 LOST ISLAND	2 THE GRUDGE	2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 12:50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30	THX GUARANTEED SEATS LORD OF THE RINGS: 4 TWO TOWERS 1:00	2 MYSTIC RIVER
3 CABIN FEVER	THX GUARANTEED SEATS 3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 2:00 4:50 7:50 10:30	REGINE VELASQUEZ Dec. 19 & 20 - 9pm	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 ELF 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20 11:30	3 ELF
4 OUT OF TIME	4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 MYSTIC RIVER 3:00 5:50 8:40 11:30	4 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN
	5 ELF		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 INTOLERBALE CRUELTY 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20 10:30	5 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
	6 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2			
	7 SCARY MOVIE 3			

For sreening times, call 729-7777. Movies are subject to change without prior notice. Reserve your seats by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 and send to 2333. Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.

Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	GENIE, BAKIT?
Ali 2	ALIPIN
Ali 3	CABIN FEVER
Ali 4	LOST ISLAND
Ali 5	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
Ali 6	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
Ali 7	MYSTIC RIVER

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL

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DEC 17	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
DEC 22	DISNEY ON ICE-CHARITY PREMIERE 8PM
DEC 23	DISNEY ON ICE-GRAND OPENING 8PM
DEC 25	DISNEY ON ICE: 4:30PM / 8:00PM
DEC 26	DISNEY ON ICE: 4:30PM / 8:00PM
DEC 27	DISNEY ON ICE: 1PM / 4:30PM / 8PM
DEC 28	DISNEY ON ICE: 1PM / 4:30PM / 8PM

FOR TICKETS, CALL TICKETNET AT 911-5555.

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Invitational SMART Premiere

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SM Megamall Cinema 3

Subject to MTRCB RATING

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The Journey Ends
LORD OF THE RINGS THE RETURN OF THE KING
Brought to you by: TEXT CINEMA to 239

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ALIPIN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	ANG BABAE SA BREAKWATER
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BIKTIMA
CINEMA-2	ALIPIN
CINEMA-3	WAG KA KIKIBO
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RUGRATS GO WILD
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CINEMA-8	MYSTIC RIVER
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LOST ISLAND
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORDS OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	STAR RUNNER
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-15	ELF
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	OUT OF TIME
CINEMA-1	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-2	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
CINEMA-4	COLD CREEK MANOR
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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"THE MOST ANTICIPATED HORROR MOVIE OF THE YEAR!

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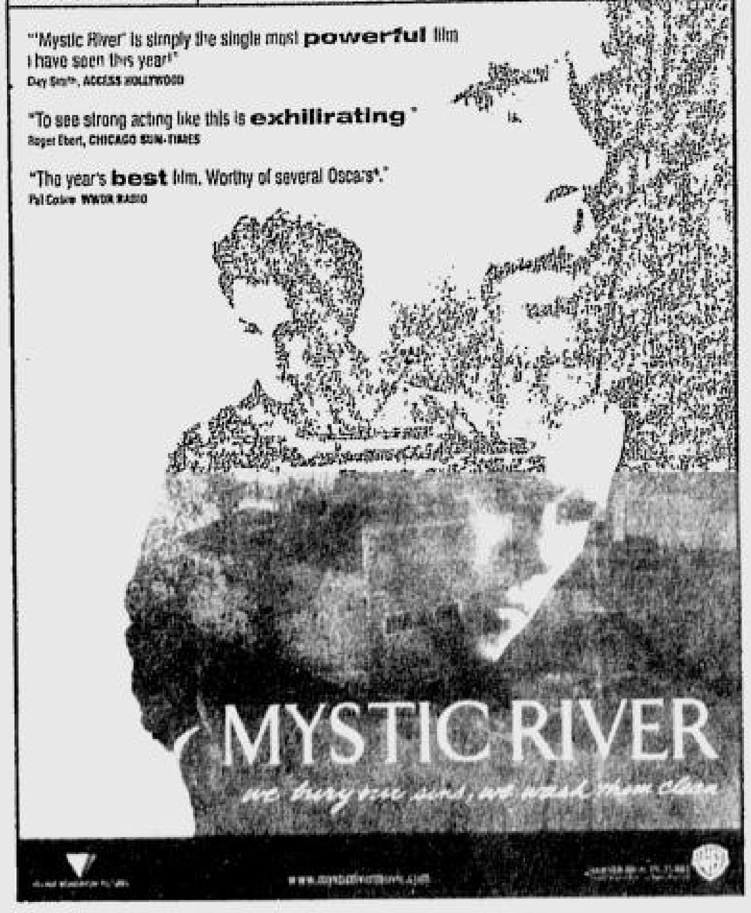

"'Mystic River' is simply the single most **powerful** film I have seen this year!"
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"To see strong acting like this is **exhilirating**"
Roger Ebert, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

"The year's **best** film. Worthy of several Oscars."
Pat Collins, WWOR RADIO

MYSTIC RIVER
we bury our sins, we wash them clean

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

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EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

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(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DOLBY) CABIN FEVER
2 (SDDS) MASTER AND COMMANDER
3 (DTS) LOONEY TUNES
4 GOLD (DTS ES) OUT OF TIME
5 GOLD (DOLBY EX) JEEPERS CREEPERS-2
6 GOLD (SDDS) WRONG TURN
7 GOLD (DOLBY EX) INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
8 LOST ISLAND
9 ELF
10 THE GRUDGE-1

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 (DTS) RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 (DTS) RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA 1 2 3
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 ALIPIN
2 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
3 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
2 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3 ALIPIN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) LOST ISLAND
5 BIKTIMA

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 ALIPIN
2 BIKTIMA
3 MR. SUAVE
4 TILL THER WAS YOU
5 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
6 LOST ISLAND

M star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel 873.5004
1 MR. SUAVI
2 FIRST ROMANCE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 893-4225, 892-2503
MYSTIC RIVER

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 RUGRATS
2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC
tel 930.9515
1
2
3

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) TEL. 776-74-21
1 SUGAT SA PURI
2 ALIPIN NG ALIW
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588
1 (SDDS) RESERVE
4 RESERVE
5 BIKTIMA
6 LOST ISLAND
7 (DTS) JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
8 (SDDS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
9 (DOLBY) AS BOOBS

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508
2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364-3781
1 BIKTIMA
2 MR. SUAVE
3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
4 (SDDS) LOST ISLAND
5 ALIPIN
6 (DOLBY) JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
7 (DTS) JEEPER CREEPERS
8 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
9 AS BOOBS

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0082
1 ALIPIN
2 (SDDS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
3 (DTS) JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
4 (DOLBY) INTERNET QUEEN
5 AS BOOBS

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795
1 AS BOOBS
2 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KALANG
3 (DTS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
4 BIKTIMA
5 (SDDS) LOST ISLAND

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 RESERVE

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888
1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724
Dilson BIKTIMA
Lords
Jennet

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 BIKTIMA
2 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
3 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
4 RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) LOST ISLAND
2 ALIPIN
3 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
4 JEANIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
5 AS BOOBS

FRC Cinema
(Talaba Bacoor Cavite)
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 LIBERATED
2 MR. SUAVE

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400
1 JENNIE BAKIT NGAYON KA LANG
2 ALIPIN
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) CABIN FEVER
4 (SDDS) LOST ISLAND
5 (DTS) JEEPERS CREEPERS
6 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
7 MYSTIC RIVER

FarmersPlaza CINEMAS
tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna) TEL. (049) 837-0926
1 ALIPIN
2 AS BOOBS
3 (DTS) THE PHONE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 RUGRATS THE MOVIE
2 (DTS) WISHER
3 (DOLBY) CABIN FEVER
4 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 THE PHONE
2 (DOLBY) RUGRATS THE MOVIE
3 (DTS) MSYTIC RIVER
4 CABIN FEVER

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 LOONEY TUNE
2 STAR RUNNER
3 (DOLBY) WRONG TURN
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 MR. SUAVE
2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 (DOLBY) COLD CREEK MANOR
4 (DTS) OUT OF TIME

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 (DOLBY)
2
3

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
2 JEANIE BAKIT NGYON KA LANG
3 (DTS) AS BOOBS
4 ALIPIN

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) MR. BONE
2 ALIPIN
3 (DTS) WISHER
4 HUWAG KANG KIKIBO
5 AS BOOBS

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 STAR RUNNER
2 ALIPIN
3

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 RUGRATS GO WILD
2 STAR RUNNER
3

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 COLD CREEK MANOR
2 ALIPIN
3 (DTS) OUT OF TIME
4 STAR RUNNER

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 ALIPIN
2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 ALIPIN
2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 DARK BLUE
4 MYSTIC RIVER

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03
1 (DOLBY EX) STAR RUNNER
2 GOOD BOY
3 (DTS ES) MYSTIC RIVER
4 JEEPER CREEPERS

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887-0121
1 STAR RUNNER
2 GOOD BOY
3 (DOLBY) JEEPER CREEPERS
4 MYSTIC RIVER

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

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BUSINESS

SUPREME COURT RULING

John Hay developer suspends rent payment

BAGUIO CITY—The developer of Camp John Hay has suspended rent payment and talks on the settlement of its obligations to the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) to protest a Supreme Court ruling that nullified its tax privileges.

Fil Estate chair Robert John Sobrepena, president of the Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevCo), told BCDA in a Dec. 12 letter that withholding all payments was a contractual remedy to the court's Oct. 28 en banc ruling.

The ruling reversed Proclamation 420, which was issued by former President Fidel Ramos, granting locators of the John Hay economic zone full tax exemption and incentives.

The tribunal said that while Ramos had the authority to create BCDA-administered economic zones under Republic Act 7227 (the BCDA law), only Congress could grant tax immunities.

Sobrepena ordered the pay suspension "pending rectification of this legal debacle we find ourselves in and pending fulfillment by BCDA of its express warranty and obligation to ensure the (John Hay special economic zone) tax exemptions and incentives package."

He cited civil code provisions that protect a leaseholder's assets when he ordered the suspension.

"The decision certainly comes as a total shock to CJHDevCo inasmuch as the existence of the case was never disclosed by BCDA during the pre-bid and bidding process or anytime thereafter, and (not) even during the three years of negotiations (that led) to the signing of the memorandum of agreement," Sobrepena said.

This agreement obliged CJHDevCo to pay P50 million in increments to pay its back rentals between 1999 and 2002, and to assign to the government its assets to cover interest payments.

Sobrepena said information about the suit would have allowed the firm "the right and opportunity to intervene as an interested party."

Lawyer Gina Alvarez, CJHdevCo senior vice president for legal affairs, said the developer has withheld the third P50-million installment for December of a restructured P1-billion debt payment schedule that covers four years of back rentals.

But BCDA has anticipated this consequence from the Supreme Court decision.

Lawyer Liza Pagano-Calde, counsel for estate manager John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC), said BCDA is asserting the terms of the John Hay lease because the court ruling can still be appealed.

"We know that (BCDA locators) would see the ruling as justification (to renegotiate their accounts), but we have not suspended all economic zone privileges. My last instruction to JHMC personnel is to allow even zero-tariff supplies that are being imported because until the ruling is final, we can still apply Proclamation 420," Calde said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Bahrain eyed to save, revive Al-Amanah

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE KINGDOM of Bahrain, the global center of Islamic banking and finance, is keen on rehabilitating and beefing up the capital of Al-Amanah Islamic Bank in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's bid to spur financial activity in Southern Philippines.

In a speech before the Filipino community in Bahrain, Ms Macapagal related how Bahrain Prime Minister Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa had expressed interest in helping the government strengthen Al-Amanah during their meeting Monday.

"I told him we also have an Islamic bank in the Philippine s which they might be interested in buying and rehabilitating. The Prime Minister asked me to tell him who to talk to and said he would immediately give his instruction," the President said.

The President took note of Bahrain's developmental role in global Islamic banking which is now present in 75 countries with a market size of over $250 billion. The essential feature of Islamic banking is that it is interest-free, in accordance with the tenets of Islam.

Since taking office nearly three years ago, the President has peddled Al-Amanah to a number of Muslim countries such as Malaysia and Brunei but the bank's huge liabilities have turned off prospective investors.

The Al-Amanah Bank was established in 1973 through a presidential decree as a specialized banking institution to serve the special banking needs of the Muslim community. The bank, however, has been hounded by mismanagement and serious financial trouble that it has attracted very little interest from investors.

The President is looking at establishing a stable financial institution in Mindanao as part of her goal of sparking economic development in the region.

IMF doubts projected gov't revenue from tax amnesty program

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund is doubtful that the government can raise the estimated P9.4 billion in additional revenue from the proposed tax amnesty law that Malacañang wanted Congress to pass before the elections in May.

The Fund raised its doubt during a meeting with Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr.

Other sources said the IMF was worried that the government was focusing too much on getting the tax amnesty passed at the expense of more important revenue measures such as the indexation of beer and tobacco taxes, the rationalization of the documentary stamp tax, and the imposition of gross receipt tax on banks.

The indexation alone should give the government a one-time windfall of P14 billion while the rationalization of the DST should yield another P5 billion yearly.

"We told them that there is a chance we will not be able to collect as much from the amnesty. Historically, the tax take from an amnesty program was not substantial. What is important is the data that we will get from the tax amnesty program, which we can use to widen our tax base," Parayno said.

The 10 amnesty laws during the time of Marcos yielded only P1.5 billion in additional collection while the three amnesty programs during the time of the Aquino administration raised only P1.37 billion.

Based on the estimates made by the Department of Finance and the National Economic and Development Authority, the government could earn an additional P2.14 billion from individuals and P7.26 billion from corporate taxpayers based on an amnesty rate of 3 percent.

The government assumed that only households falling under the income class of P3 million and above and understating their assets by 40 percent would avail themselves of the amnesty while 5 percent of large corporations and 10 percent of small and medium-scale firms would also take advantage of the chance to clear their past due accounts without penalties.

Pending before Congress is a bill proposing tax amnesty on all unpaid tax dues up to year 2001. The bill's foremost objective, according to the government, was to require all taxpayers to submit their statement of assets, liabilities and net worth up to 2001.

Adopting the position of the finance department, Malacañang had proposed to Congress the implementation of a tax amnesty rate of 10 percent based on increases in net worth for those amending their tax declarations and 3 percent based on total net worth for those without any previous financial statement with the BIR.

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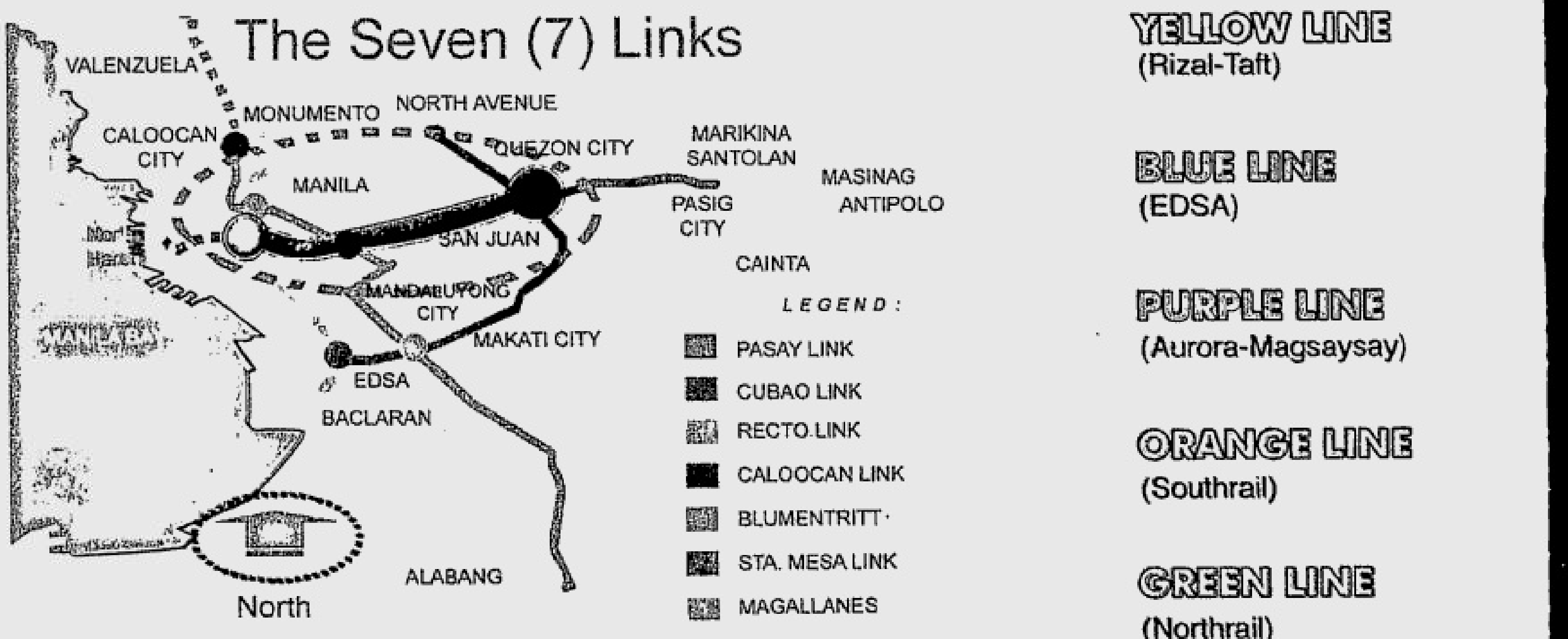

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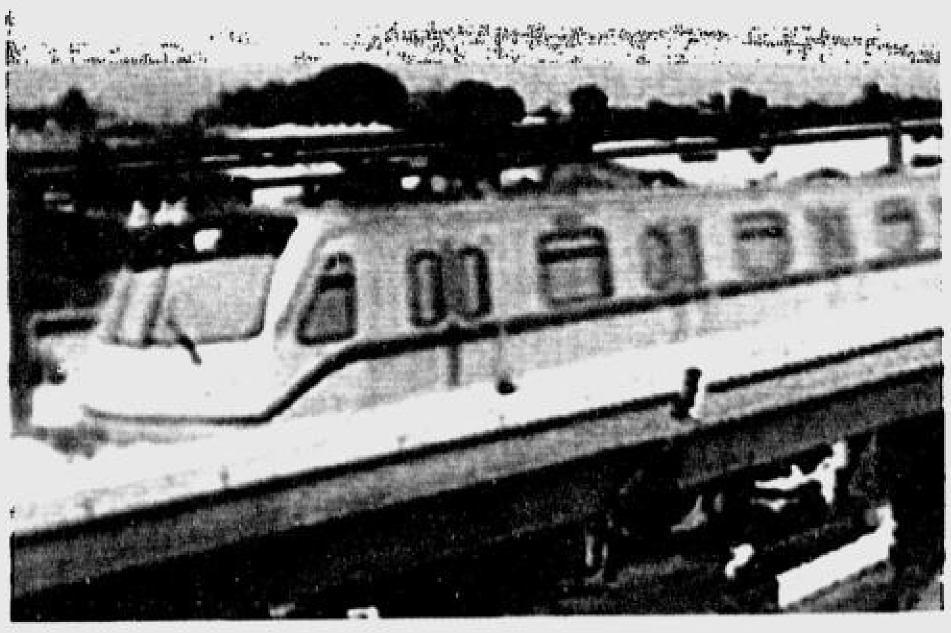

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PEOPLE at WORK

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Idealistic employee asks, 'How can I relate well with difficult boss?'

By Atty. Felipe L. Gozon,
Chair & CEO, GMA Network Inc.

ASK YOUR CEO

I HAVE read RMA's letter on his frustration on having a perfectionist boss. As for me, my dilemma is having an incompetent and inconsiderate boss. I am a regular employee in a top company and it has been a practice here that a new manager will take over after a certain period.

My former boss has been a very good superior. He knows how to handle his people well. He is also very competent and efficient as he is a leader and an effective decision maker. In totality, he is not only a good manager but also a good friend. He is a perfect epitome of a credible and efficient manager. Due to his outstanding contributions to the company, he was promoted. We were so very happy for him.

However, the manager who replaced him was not competent enough to be a manager. We understand that he is new and must learn many things yet. But this must not be an excuse for making wrong decisions and handling his staff and subordinates improperly. Aside from easily giving in to pressure, he would utter so many hurting words, which does not motivate everyone in the team to work well and give their best. His insecurity is greatly manifested in his ways.

How will an employee believe in his boss when after a few days (when a project is almost done) he would change his decisions (which means our team must start all over again) because he thought he has a better idea and that he was wrong earlier? How will an employee believe in his boss who, after cascading directions of the top management, would comment against those directions?

IDEALISTIC/ B2-3

CEO mentor Gozon

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Flexible benefits programs empower employees

By Peter Paul V. Cauton

(This is the second part of last week's article on flexible benefits.)

WHILE the advantages of the program are clear enough, there are, however, some additional challenges that the implementation of a flexible benefit system poses to a company.

Bad choices

One challenge is the employee's potential to make bad choices. Because employees are given the freedom to decide, they can also make mistakes in their choices. Oftentimes, what happens is that some employees fail to put much needed emphasis on "protection" benefits such as health and insurance options, or fail to choose an appropriate number of leaves for the term.

Another potential disadvantage is the difficulty of administering and monitoring the program. Instead of having one package to administer, a company's HR team will have to administer a number of benefit packages equal to the number employees. Among the items the HR team has to keep track are: the employee's benefit choices, consumption levels throughout the term, as well as the usual questions and concerns regarding each benefit. To avoid this potentially nightmarish situation, I would recommend installing an information system to help sort the amount of data that will be generated by migrating to a flexible scheme.

Difficult bargaining

Additionally, since you cannot accurately predict the number of employees who would be choosing a particular benefit item, negotiations between benefit suppliers could also become quite tricky. Bargaining for the best prices would be more difficult, as a company migrating to a flexible benefit system would now lose the advantage of economies of scale.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

My company is now on its third year of implementing flexible benefits. Through the years, we have drawn several key lessons as we continue with the endeavor of improving benefits system of our company. Hopefully, these insights, as follows, will prove quite helpful for companies who are planning to migrate to a flexible benefits system.

1. Proper communication is essential. The program is definitely far more complicated than most traditionally formatted benefit schemes. A planned migration will entail a good amount of explanation for the employees to properly understand and appreciate it.

2. Sufficient preparation period is quite important. Without a doubt, a company planning to migrate to a flexible scheme should do its utmost to ensure such a program is in line with how their company is structured, what it wants to achieve, and what type of people it employs.

3. It is essential to use a tax strategy with the benefit items. Employees would always want to seek value for their money. The key to doing this is to select benefits that have tax reduction implications. It is very important to check the labor laws and fringe benefit tax laws to find out which benefits have tax reduction implications and which benefits the company can use when creating their menu.

4. Administrative excellence is a must. Again, administration would include managing multiple benefit packages. Aside from utilizing an information system, back end management and administrative procedures have to be impeccable to reduce a human error and administrative problems.

Alignment

Overall, as long as there is a strategic fit with the company's objectives, I would highly recommend migrating to a flexible benefits scheme. The reason is basic as ordering coffee from a local coffee shop: being empowered to get exactly what you want.

(The author, Peter Paul V. Cauton, is the human resources executive of the Philippine operations of Soluziona, a Spanish IT and management consulting firm. Send feedback to inquire@ph.soluziona.com.)

Beware the perils of email

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I just read about a bunch of people who got fired for email they sent at work. What tips can you give to help me avoid the same fate?

Scared to Send

I recently read about an investment advisor who was surprised one day to have his garbage man greet him with a smile and a handshake. It seems the garbage man had been taking the guy's neatly bundled business magazines home and reading them. Based on one article, he'd made a killing on Ebay—an investment the investment advisor himself had spurned.

Guidelines

Which just goes to show: there can be gold in your garbage, but not always for you. And the same is true for email. What you toss in your virtual trash can turn into pay dirt for someone else (as even Microsoft learned when email sent by company execs became some of the most damaging evidence in their antitrust case).

'What you toss in your virtual trash can turn into pay dirt for someone else'

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

To protect yourself, consider the following issues and always "send" with caution. For more, check out Michael Overly's book "E Policy" (Amacom, 1999).

Do you consider email private? Instead of referring to them as email, we really ought to call them "epostcards," because it's all too easy for lots of people to read them.

Official business only

Are your email too informal? I often send email in my underwear—which I can get away with since I work at home. But unless you want to get undressed by your email, you need to remind yourself that when you're at work, everything you send is official business—even if it feels more like just a casual note to a friend. So learn how to keep them formal even if you aren't.

Do you think about someone forwarding your message? I've heard from numerous people who have trashed coworkers in "private" email, only to have their messages forwarded to the very people they trashed. So go ahead—mouth off in your email, but always assume they'll end up in the last place you want to see them.

Be careful

Are you careful when you hit "send"? I've also heard from people whose email went awry because of their own ineptitude. There was the guy, for instance, who emailed me to say that instead of sending a note to a new employee who'd caught his eye, he hit the wrong button and sent it to his entire company. His current girlfriend, who worked there too, put him in the dead letter file. Yup, I've met the enemy and sometimes it is us.

Do you realize that email is seldom, if ever, really deleted? Email is like a cockroach: tough to kill. Try as you might to delete it, corporate networks often give it everlasting life. Write every email as if your boss will eventually read it.

So just remember that email often has a way of bugging you long after you think you've killed it. Or, as a friend who is a computer programmer is fond of saying, "garbage in, garbage out."

Poll results

Here are the results of our last workingwounded.com /ABCnews.com poll: Which best describes your feelings about email? (1,935 responses)

—Hate it, 4.7%
—Drowning in it, 20.7%
—Love it, 74.5%

(Mr. Rosner is the author of bestsellers "The Boss's Survival Guide," McGraw Hill 2001, and "Working Wounded," Warner 2000, a speaker and founder of the award-winning Working Wounded.com and RetentionEvangelist.com. He is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. Email him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

'Email often has a way of bugging you long after you think you've killed it'

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

Are personal computer files company property?

By Resty S. Odon

AN ARTICLE that appeared in Occupational Health magazine (UK) pondered on this question and came up with, at best a vague answer. The article presented the case of an employee whose personal email files have been accessed by his employer without his knowledge. His employer cited company security or some other alibi. From what I gathered, the British court has yet to decide with finality whether it was a case of a company's violation of a person's privacy.

In its defense, the company reminded everyone that the worker's computer is company property. On the other hand, the lawyer of the aggrieved employee argued that the case might be likened to an employer's locker. The locker is company property but the things kept therein remain the employee's property. The company has no right to touch or take that property without the employee's consent.

The counter-arguments posed subsequently were: Doesn't the company have the right to at least open the locker and check into what's inside? What if an object, a security threat like an unauthorized gun or explosive, is being locked up? Who shall define what is a security threat? Where do we draw the line between a company's right to know and an individual's right to privacy?

This writer's questions: Can an employee lay personal claim on a property he doesn't own? Can a company snoop into a person's private affairs like personal e-mail or letters? Ah, the problems posed by the digital age ...

(What's your take on this? We invite readers to share their thoughts on this issue. Write to peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.-*PaW Ed)*

When becoming 'batty' can keep you sane

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

SOMETIMES learning how to strike a happy work-life balance is like cracking the sonar system of a bat, navigating around icebergs, and teaching the blind how to bike.

The way of the bat

Trust the Discovery Channel and my Zen teacher to put me on this train of thought. I caught a documentary on, of all things, bats. They talked about the highly developed sonar gifts of bats and how even though they are virtually blind, they use their sensitive ears to catch sound waves that echo back the distance of objects, effectively warning them of obstacles ahead and around them.

In Japan, they have found a way to borrow the bat's gift to create a kind of sonar hearing aid for the blind. The documentary showed how, wearing the gadget like a skullcap, a blind man biked through the winding path of a park, skillfully navigating through a stunningly beautiful phalanx of cherry blossom trees. To those who witnessed this miracle, he said, and I paraphrase: "When I became blind, I perceived objects as dangerous obstacles, lurking in the darkness waiting to hurt me or to bring me down. Now, with the sonar gadget, sounds bounce off these objects. They send friendly warning and define the space where I can be most free."

To this, my Zen teacher added: it took the sinking of the Titanic to make maritime scientists study how icebergs can be detected on a ship's route. Only when the most invulnerable ship was brought down, did they throw all their energy into getting to know icebergs and turning their threat into friendly warning signs.

Crashing to be free

The path to work-life harmony, to inner balance, is the same. We have to bump into unseen trees and crash into iceberg tips, so that we can sit up, take notice, listen with a new set of ears, and get to know the inner space where we can be most free.

Working mom Susan, 45, echoed this lesson to me in very real terms. Five years ago, she worked six days a week as communications strategist for a very dynamic corporation. She had an expensive house, designed and furnished by a well-known interior decorator. She dressed in expensive clothes, befitting her status in the corporate world. She was undeniably one of the most powerful women in her field. Yet her lifestyle expenses ate up most of her salary, and the pace of her work gave her little time at home, where, as a single mom, she lived with her two sons.

Then, she was diagnosed with cancer. While in treatment, she had an epiphany: She decided to quit her job, sell her house, use the money to buy a modest home where she could live mortgage-free. She took a public relations job at a slower-paced non-government organization, where she is making a tremendous impact in community development yet gets to work from the house four days a week. Today, she says: "I have met people who have nothing but were so happy. I have no savings, but I have time for the kids and for me."

Susan hit an iceberg, listened to her heart, and found a way to be most free.

Blessing in disguise

A delicate pregnancy forced a dear friend of mine to stay flat on her back, in bed for over six months. She was founder and driving force of her own business; and she was convinced all would fall apart without her. She accepted the doctor's orders like a death sentence. She lay in bed as if trapped in solitary confinement.

Angry and anxious, she flailed against the situation, thus failing to see that her employees, demonstrating how well she had trained them, had rallied forward and kept the business running. She also failed to seize the chance to relish this moment to bond with her unborn child, one she had waited almost eight years to have. She focused too much on the obstacles to running the race and was blind to the freedom she finally had to keep still, reflect on the miracle unfolding within her, and do all the little things she always wanted to do when she was too busy: read Harry Potter, cross-stitch, and watch re-runs of CSI.

Hopefully, you don't have to hit a devastating iceberg to get you to pull back and see where you can experience life to the fullest. Befriend the warning signs. Get to know your boundaries. When you're hit by guilt or by the flu, when you get chronic headaches or get weepy when your toddler or your boss goes into tantrums, don your skullcap. See with your ears. Define your limits. Listen to that inner voice that tells you: keep still and know where your freedom lies and where cherry blossoms bloom.

(An Mercado-Alcantara is founding editor of Working Mom magazine, published by ABS-CBN Publishing. You can write to her at an_alcantara@abs.pinoycentral.com.)

RAISE THE SALARY BAR IN 2004

Five simple ways to up paycheck ante during slow economy

By Joel Garfinkle
Dream Job Coaching

WHETHER your New Year's resolution is to receive a raise, promotion, bigger office, flexible work schedule or other professional perks, sitting quietly and hoping to be rewarded isn't going to get you anything except frustrated.

As the New Year begins, here are five surefire strategies to trumpet your achievements and successfully up the paycheck ante—even during the most challenging of economic times:

1. Schedule time and prepare facts. The first step to a pay raise or promotion in 2004 is to schedule time and prepare facts for a negotiation interview. This interview is a formal meeting with your supervisor to explore discrepancies between your current salary and the salary you deserve.

Be sure you know what the average salary is for your industry, your division, and your position. Investigate what the average increases in salary are and what the industry averages are in comparison with your company. Regardless of your company's economic circumstances, an employer can't deny documented facts, which prove you deserve what you're asking for.

2. Highlight your contributions and relationships. Prepare well-documented statements about the work, outcomes, and professional relationships for which you are responsible. Documented facts overcome objections to pay increases.

Record your professional facts, achievements, and successes in a daily journal. In particular, document and focus on results that were overlooked during your formal annual review. Highlight concrete examples of how you performed above and beyond the employer's expectations, contributed creative and innovative ideas, saved the company money, and other self-initiated solutions for which you were responsible.

Be aware of and make detailed notes regarding what your peers and supervisors say about working with you, your achievements, and what you mean to the team or the organization. Often these laudatory comments are made orally, and never find their way into your formal review or to upper management. This list of informal commendations can become key points that prove your worth to the organization.

3. Internalize positive outcomes. Mentally and/or orally prepare for your negotiation interview. By internalizing the details and positive outcome of your negotiation interview, you'll be in top form and all of your preparation will pay off. While you're driving, gazing into the bathroom mirror, or even walking your dog, envision the most likely questions you'll be asked and practice your best responses. Imagine, again and again, your employer responding and offering you the exact salary or professional perk you desire.

4. Organize and present your case. When you're ready to present your case, be well organized. Your presentation must reflect your intelligence, value, thoughtfulness, preparation, and seriousness. To transition the meeting toward your agenda, you might say: "I have some valuable facts, which should be considered as you go through your recommendations and decisions regarding my future within this organization."

Be prepared to respond to all typical salary objections. For example, many modern companies have a fixed three percent annual pay increase. In this case, respond by noting a handful of your previously documented facts, achievements, and successes (recorded in your daily journal). Say: "I understand this is all you can give, but I have done this (a) and this (b) and this (c)." For every objection or "no" that your supervisor utters, calmly review your accomplishments.

Another tactful response to fixed average raise amounts: "I'm not an average employee. What I've accomplished is above average and should be looked at and rewarded accordingly."

5. Ask for more and be sure it's in writing. Ask for at least 10 percent more salary than what you feel you deserve. This provides you with more breathing room. The hard facts you've collected speak the truth and can add the necessary confidence to your review. Remember, you deserve more than they could ever pay you.

Secondly, no matter how successful your in-person negotiation turns out to be, nothing is official unless it's written down. Ask for and receive your supervisor's commitment in writing before you leave the negotiation interview. (Many employers verbally agree to pay increases that either take months to become a reality or are never honored at all.) Then, the week after the interview, follow up, follow up, and follow up. Stay on top of management until the company comes follows through in your favor.

Given that many employers in today's tight labor market are willing to bend over backwards to lure and retain key people, you might be pleasantly surprised how much your boss appreciates you for taking the initiative to keep the lines of communication open. Regardless of how much you believe you deserve a raise, you never truly know how much you are worth to your company until you ask.

(For more information on salary negotiation, dream job careers or executive dynamics, contact Joel Garfinkle, founder of Dream Job Coaching. You can also review more than 300 pages of content at dreamjobcoaching.com.)

Achievements

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Labor market conditions seen to improve in next two quarters

MANILA—The unemployment rate in the Philippines fell to 10.1 percent in October, a marked improvement over the 12.7 percent level recorded in July, the government said Monday.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri expressed confidence that job prospects would improve in 2004 as the domestic and world economies pick up.

However, the 10.1 percent unemployment in October was only little changed from the 10.2 percent posted in the same month last year, the National Statistics Office said in a statement.

This meant that about 3.55 million people were unemployed in October compared to 4.39 million unemployed in July.

Neri said that labor market conditions should improve in the fourth quarter of 2003 and in 2004 as the economy strengthens further.

He cited better prospects for agriculture due to better weather and government support, a boost in export demand from the recovery in the global economy, as well as growth in the information technology sector.

He said the favorable data in the latest labor force survey is a reflection of a pick-up in economic activity in the third quarter as all sectors generated more new jobs than they lost.

Of all those employed, 37 percent were engaged in the agriculture, fisheries and forestry sector, 47.3 percent in services and 15.7 percent in industry, the statistics office said. *AFP*

Idealistic employee

From page B2-1

How will an employee believe in his boss when after following his instructions, you would be blamed for inefficiency?

Well, I guess, there are incompetent superiors and managers not only in my corporate world but also in our government. And for us, young and budding employees, this can be very frustrating.

I don't know how change can happen. But I am not losing hope. Perhaps, you know some things on how we can relate well with difficult and incompetent bosses and change them for the better. Thank you.

MFM

Obviously, because of the nature of your complaint against your "incompetent and inconsiderate" boss, a manager in a top company, you have chosen to hide your identity.

You ask for suggestions on how you could relate well with your present boss and change him for the better. This is a difficult task.

I suppose your company is a multinational company with a branch office or subsidiary in the Philippines that rotates the managers assigned to its branches or subsidiaries every so often. While you are still a relatively new employee, you have served under the former manager whom you characterized as an "epitome of a credible and efficient manager" and "a good friend." That is why you cannot help but compare him with your present boss.

Reality

It is a reality in the corporate world that employees cannot and do not choose who their bosses will be, in the same way that we cannot choose our relatives. It is also a reality that not all managers are competent and considerate of the employees under them.

The top decision makers in your company must have seen something in your present boss that is why he was appointed as a manager in the first place. They will certainly be interested to know how well their managers perform. In GMA-7, we conduct performance reviews of our officers twice a year that include not only their competence in discharging their functions but also how well they relate to the employees under them. In addition, we have placed suggestions boxes in strategic areas where anyone can make suggestions or comments about the company and its officers. We have found this effective in receiving constructive suggestions, complaints and information that otherwise we will not know. And we promptly act on the complaints and suggestions received.

You may suggest to your management to put similar suggestion boxes where the employees could air their suggestions and comments. You may do this anonymously, if you wish, to hide your identity.

Constructive dialogue

Depending on your evaluation of whether your boss will take it personally or not if his staff talks with him privately, you may initiate a meeting between your boss and his staff for a constructive dialogue on how to improve the relationship between them. In this meeting, the staff can make constructive suggestions to your boss. It may not be productive for the employees to directly accuse your boss of being incompetent, inconsiderate and insecure in this meeting. While no one wants to hear bad things about himself, every manager should or ought to be interested in improving his relationship with his subordinates and the workflow or efficiency in his department or division. A manager cannot do everything that needs to be done. He has to delegate to his subordinates. And it has been aptly said that the basic job of a manager is to manage people.

The antidote to a superior who shifts the blame to a subordinate for allegedly not following his instructions when things go awry is to regularly report to him in writing.

Next higher level

You may also consider writing to the chief executive or chief operating officer of your company (anonymously if you wish), about your comments and observations on your boss. But be sure to state that you are doing so for the purpose of improving the efficiency and to better achieve the specific objectives of your department or division. If your CEO or COO will do his job, your comments will be looked into and remedial measures will be put in place depending on the results of the investigation.

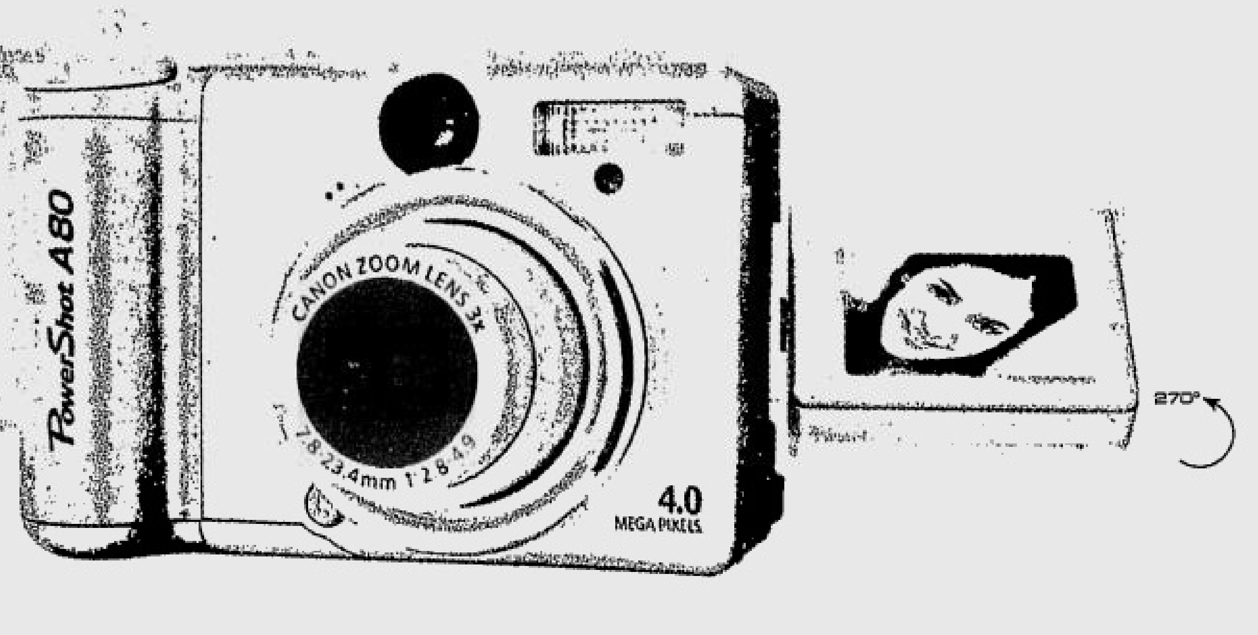
Since you know your present boss, the pertinent policy and practice of your company, the officers to whom your boss reports, and the feelings and opinions of your co-employees in your department or division, you will be in the best position to determine, which of the above suggestions would be effective or can be prioritized.

In any case, I wish you good luck. Your intention is good and will redound to the benefit of your company. I wish you were working in GMA-7.

(Our CEO columnists can answer requests for career advice through this column. Send your request by postal mail to People at Work Editor, PDI Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City 1200 or e-mail peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph.)

Canon

Whichever angle you view it from, the new Canon PowerShot A80 gives you amazing value.



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Check out all the fabulous features you'll get!

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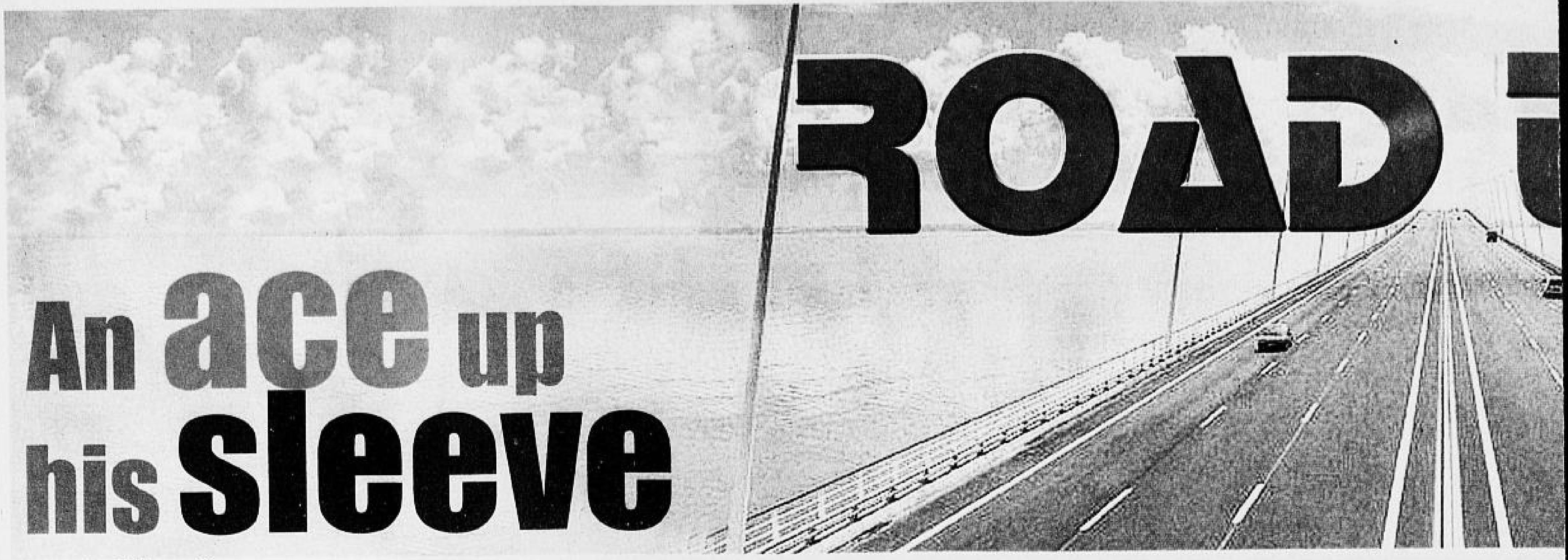

An ace up his sleeve

By Dino Ray V. Directo, III

IT RANKS among the world's most desirable gadget on wheels. If Bruce Lee were to be reincarnated in this lifetime as an automobile, chances are, he would likely be the Honda S2000. Like the legendary king of martial arts, the S2000 is an Asian superstar which successfully captivated and mesmerized both the Western and European markets. The car's sleek lines, distinctive front end and the rev-happy engine made the S2000 a popular weapon for both street and strip duties.

Since Honda Cars Philippines does not locally market the S2000 in fear of the taxman, this writer had to tap his sources in the drag racing community. After a few frantic SMS and phone calls to our network of friends, Dondi Montecillo of ATI Racing and Rolly Francisco of MSF Autoworks responded positively to my request.

A day after my search began for a ride and drive of an S2000, my quest ended with surprise and amazement. Getting an owner of the car to entrust me with the key is one thing, but having the owner itself accompany you during the test ride is a different story altogether. In this case, the owner of the S2000 happened to be Ace Vergel, local showbiz industry's "crown prince of action" and the original "bad boy". He was already carving this reputation when Robin Padilla was still playing with GI Joe action figures.

The crib's garage

On a hot Monday afternoon, this writer's date with the S2000 started with a visit to Ace Vergel's crib and garage in Quezon City. Upon entering the premises, a canary yellow Toyota Celica, an SLK Kompressor and a blood red S2000 greeted me. I had to pinch myself to reality to make sure what I was seeing were not mere mirages.

Among the sports cars parked in Ace's garage, the S2000 stands out like Christy Turlington with two other supermodels. The car is simply gorgeous!

After an exchange of pleasantries with Tom, Ace's nephew, Alas, as Ace is popularly known among his close associates, warmly greeted me and shook my hand. He was dressed for the occasion, wearing a black sports shirt, and matching Nike pants and ACG shoes.

We then hopped inside the S2000, with Ace behind the wheel of Honda's sports car killer. The S2000's cabin is finished in black leather and upholstery. Ace's car is equipped with a pioneer audio-video sensurround system set up worth P200,000. The sounds emanating from the entertainment system were so clear and seemed to come from, and spread out into all directions, it felt like Louie's THX cinema on wheels. Other interior gadgets include an Autometer boost and NOS pillar gauge pods and a nitrous oxide (NOS) button situated near the stick shift.

Based on the design and cabin layout of the S2000, the car was not designed for luxury, but for speed. You don't buy an S2000 to cruise along Roxas Boulevard at 60 kph. You buy an S2000 to challenge the laws of physics.

The hit

On idle, the guttural sound of the su-

ACE/ B2-6

Passion
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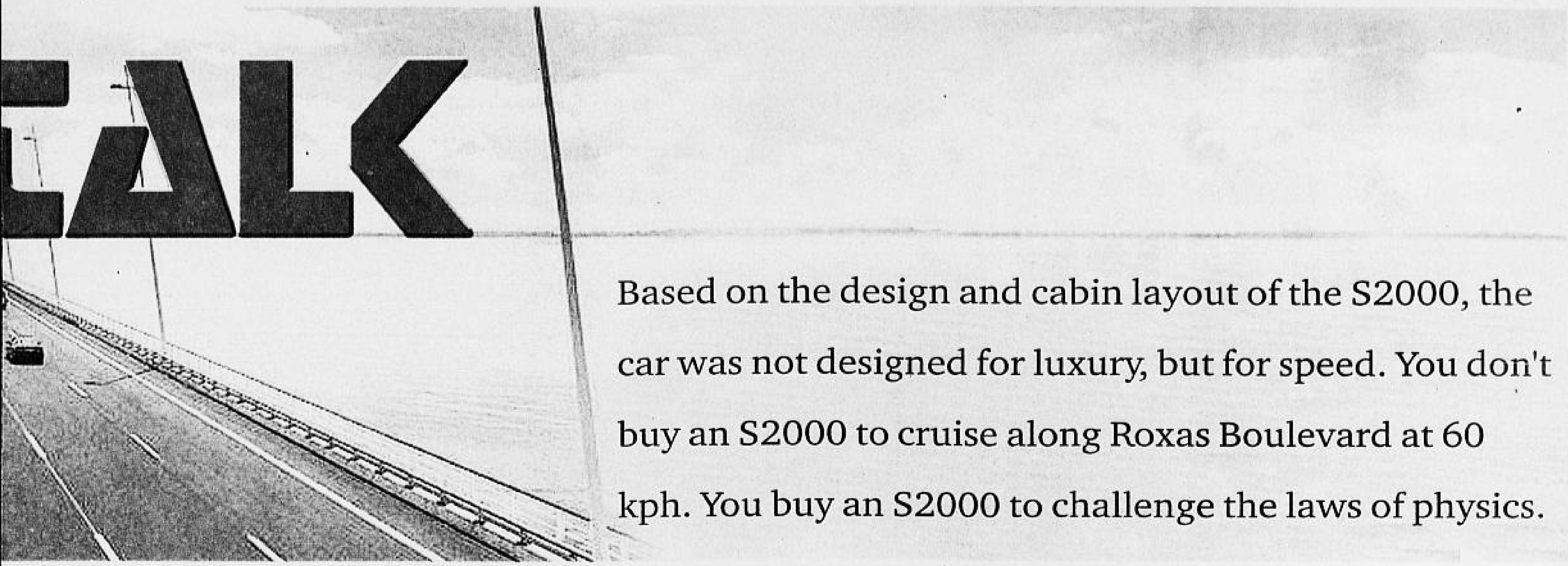

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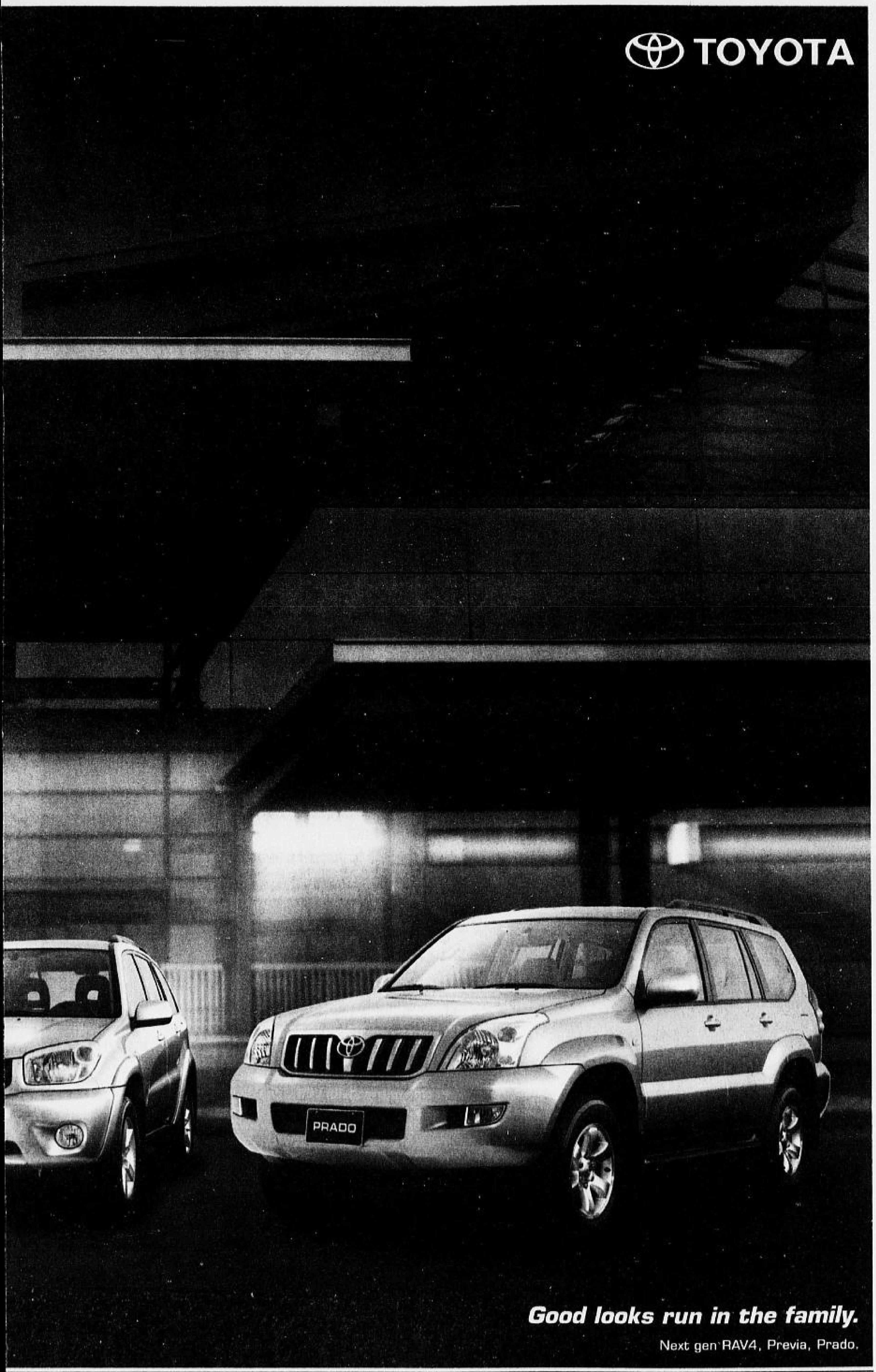

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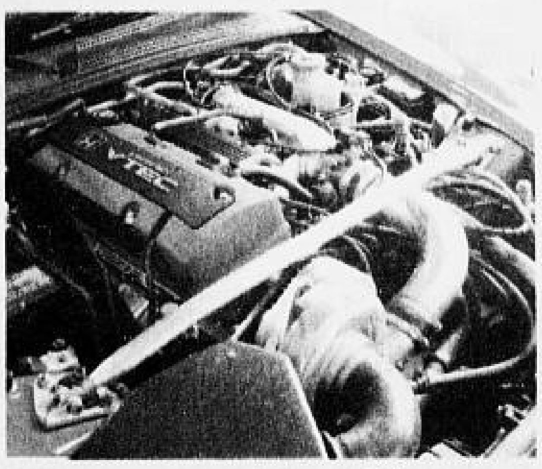
THE AERODYNAMICS is headlined by its sleek, distinctive front end.



THE MEAN engine can hold over 300 horses.

THE ORIGINAL Bad Boy's 'supermodel' of a car is the only one of its kind in the country.

From a standing start of 7,000 RPM, the 300+ hp engine launched like a jackrabbit. In 10 seconds, the S2000's digital speedometer registered 140 kph and climbing. Now I know what a human cannonball feels like.

An ace up his sleeve

From page B2-5

percharged VTEC engine was marvelous. We took the car to an open space somewhere in Quezon City to take it through its paces. From a standing start, Ace maintained the rev meter to 7,000 RPMs and let go of the hand brake. The 300+ hp engine launched like a jackrabbit, with the rear wheels spinning in a cloud of white smoke. In a few seconds, 10 to be exact, the S2000's digital speedometer registered 140 kph and climbing. A few yards away from the end of the road, Ace eased up on the gas, as the car's speedometer displayed a figure of 210 kph. "I hit the NOS button when we launched. Did you feel the power?" Ace asked this writer, as I hid my fear with a cold response of "Mismo!" Now I know what a human cannonball feels like.

From a stock 240-hp powerplant, Ace modified his S2000 to give the car an extra kick. Installation of a Comptech supercharger gave the S2000 an additional 80 hp.

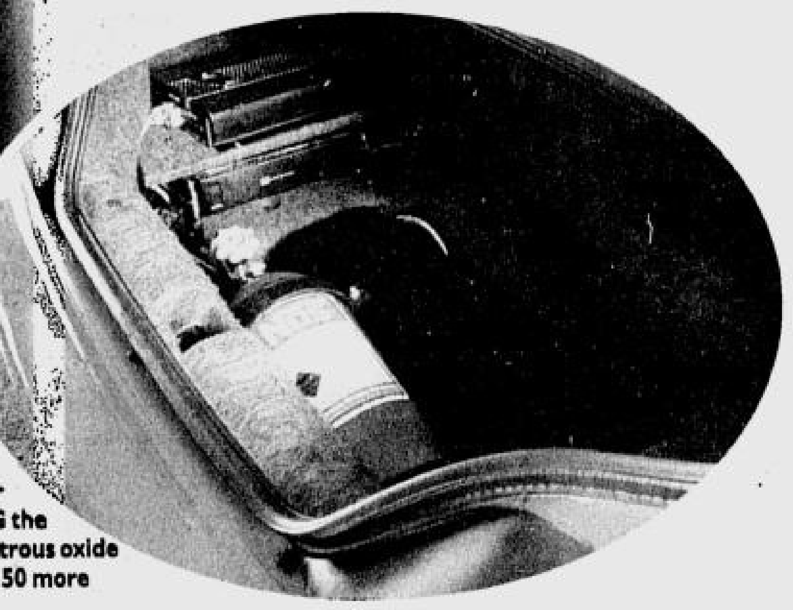
Complementing the supercharger is a nitrous oxide system, which added 50 more horses. The engine's exhaust system was replaced with an HKS system for 20 more hps under the hood. "I like my cars to be fast, so I will not be late for my appointments," adds Ace in jest.

Completing the set up of Ace's S2000 is a Spoon Limited Slip Differential (LSD) for traction control and a super single Cusco clutch for powerful launches.

Exterior bolt-on accessories were also installed to lessen wind drag: a carbon fiber Mugen front chin and spoiler. For street duties, this S2000 rides on massive 18-inch Meister mags and Dunlop formula tires. "I replace the wheels when I race with stock rims and Yokohama Advan slick tires," adds Ace.

Ace's S2000 is the only one in the Philippines. He bought the unit two years ago, after he wrecked his brand new Lancer Evolution VI. "I like the engine of this Honda, it's easy to drive, has a compact body, yet powerful. It also adds 100 pogi points to my appeal," he says during a light moment in between sips of apple juice.

During the recent drag racing competition in Clark Field, Pampanga, Ace's S2000 registered a time of 11 seconds on the quartermile track. He says that further modifications to the engine would be on hold for now. "I am happy with my Honda as it is," he says. For this writer, it was an afternoon well spent. Riding a superstar of a car with your own local movie star made it even more memorable.



COMPLEMENTING the supercharger is a nitrous oxide system, which adds 50 more horses.

In the world of 4x2 pickups, they call it a renegade.

We call it the Frontier Titanium.

Leave the competition to their name-calling. For what you've got here is styling and luxury the likes of which they have never seen. On the dash, brushed aluminum paneling and a Clarion audio system. In the cockpit, leather seats. Rear passenger seat with fold-down armrest and built-in cupholders.

Plus power side mirrors with LED signal lights and a windshield mounted rain sensor. A pickup as different from the commonplace 4x2 as can be. Those who proudly bear the badge of non-conformity, climb in and let's ride.

Other new features include notched fender flares • sprayed-on bedliner • fashion bar with 3rd brake lamp • 235/75 R15 tires • chrome plated wheels • side step tube • front bumper with integrated foglamps

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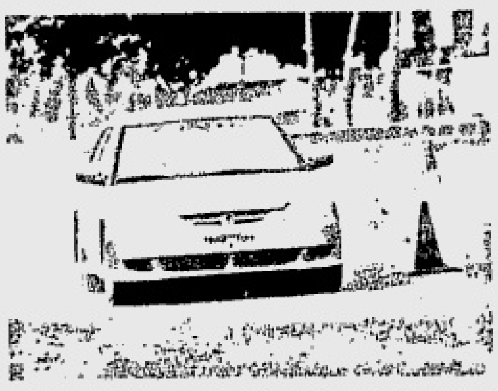
Honda holds safety driving program

HONDA Cars Philippines Inc recently held another safety driving workshop at the Liwasang Ipil-ipil, CCP Complex, as part of a series of workshops for its corporate clients. Participants in the recently concluded safety driving program include purchasing heads and officers of AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals Philippines Inc, GlaxoSmithKline, Diethelm Philippines, Zuellig Pharma, Merck Inc, Nestlé Philippines, PLDT and Abbott Laboratories. LTO head office accreditation division director Ramon Roco was also present as a special guest.

The Honda Fleet Safety Driving Program is the first of its kind in the Philippines, with HCPI being the first car manufacturer to conduct a program specifically designed to help Philippine motorists to be more conscious of safer driving.

Starting out with its fleet account members, its initial objective is to assist organizations in the development and implementation of a safety driving program within their company through the Honda Fleet Safety Driving Program.



The driving workshop was conducted by the team of Roadwise Motoring School, led by 10-time National Rally Champion driver Vip Isada. The program's module included proper driving habits and techniques, from the basic correct position to cornering and handling. The workshop provided participants, aside from lectures, hands-on applications.

With this, HCPI aims to educate the ever-increasing number of Filipino drivers on responsible motoring, eventually translating into an improved traffic discipline on our roads.

Outdoors gear

FOR DECADES, Thule Roof Rack Systems of Sweden have helped millions of car owners around the world discover how to expand the loading capacity of their cars and discover a greater world. Thule has made it easier for campers, cyclists, divers, skiers and snowboarders to broaden their horizon.

It is designed to be a perfect fit, aerodynamic and to endure external stress year after year without losing any of its functions. Shown is a Nissan Patrol SUV fitted with an X1 roof box. Thule is an approved OEM product by leading automotive manufacturers, and is certified by numerous quality assurance systems such as the Ford Q1, QS9000, the German DIN 75302, German TUV and the ISO norm 11154 and 14001.

For details on how to jazz up your Nissan Patrol, call 744-6367 for inquiries. Thule roof rack systems are also available at the Nissan Gallery Ortigas and Quezon Avenue.

4 tricycles up for grabs

GOOD news to all tricycle drivers. From now until Dec. 31, you can win instant prizes or your very own tricycle by joining the Castrol 2T Trimax Text Toda Max promo. Remove the label of each Castrol 2T Trimax bottle you buy.

For every purchase of Castrol 2T Trimax, an Instant Win or an alpha-numeric code can be found at the back of the label. You may claim the instant prize at accredited Castrol dealers, while the alpha-numeric code entitles you to the text raffle promo.

Text the alpha-numeric code to Castrol in the following format: CASTROL <space> ALPHA NUMERIC CODE <space> NAME <space> CONTACT NUMBER <space> COMPLETE ADDRESS. Send to 2311 for Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers and to 288 for Smart, Talk 'n Text and PLDT subscribers. Deadline for sending text entries is on Dec. 31, while the grand draw will be on Jan. 15, 2004. The more text entries you send, the more chances of winning.

On the road with Sukida

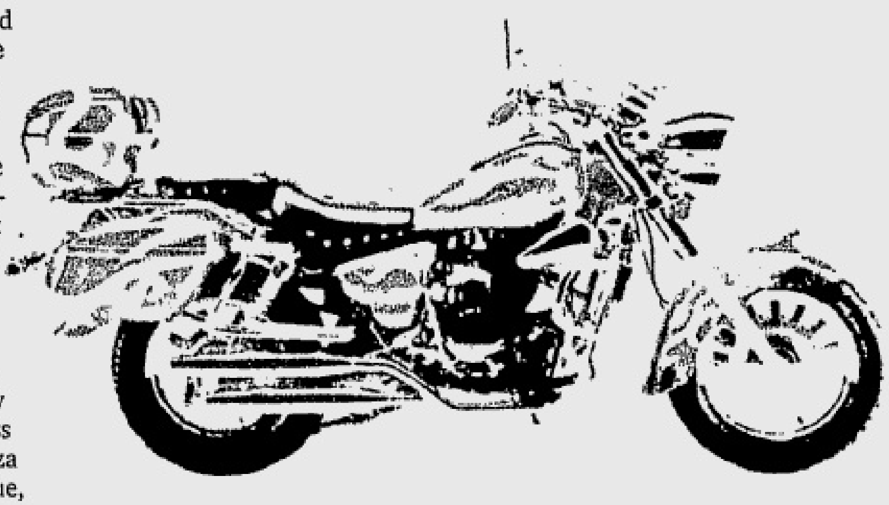
ONE of the latest China-made motorcycles seeing action on the road today is Sukida Motorcycle. It is environment-friendly with all units having 4-stroke engines complying with the Clean Air Act of not emitting street pollutants. Also, the manufacturing process has been certified by ISO-9002, an international accrediting body that assures the high quality of a product.

Sukida has 7 model units being sold in the Philippines out of the 30 models in China. Some units can be converted into tricycle as the Super Sukida 150 for business needs. Sukida Raptor Sports edition is for the sporty male and the Raptor classic for the sporty ladies. The police unit or the Police Motorcycle 150 is complete with siren and red lights. The top of the line four-wheeled unit cost P125,000 is aptly called the Renegrade 125ATV. It is an all-terrain vehicle for the mountain and beach drive. Other units are the Scorch 125 and the Radar which can be modified for racing.

Special rate for fleet buy and free helmet for every purchase of any units as per LTO requirement. Offer good for the holiday season.

Sukida is distributed in the Philippines by Chun Lung Fortune Corporation located at 2212 A Pasong Tamo, Makati City with tel. # 817-1488-5677-6771-6774 or email chunlung@pacific.net.ph.

Chun Lung Fortune Corporation will transfer office by February and the new address will be at Unit L2 Oyster Plaza Bldg. Ninoy Aquino Avenue, Kabihasnan Sucat Road, Parañaque.



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TOTAL AT RP LAUNCH OF PEUGEOT
Total (Philippines) Corp, distributor of high-quality automotive lubricants and fuels, recently signed a memorandum of agreement with AutoFrance Philippines Inc, the official distributor of Peugeot cars in the Philippines. Peugeot is one of the top-selling cars in Europe. Shown is Total president Jeff Attwood with AutoFrance president Valentin Y. Torres Jr signing the agreement with Raymund Chua, lubricants sales manager of Total Philippines and Victor L. Elarmo Jr, parts and service manager of AutoFrance. Attwood said the partnership of Total and Peugeot mirrored the international collaboration that has resulted in three successive World Rally Championship victories for the team. He added that Total hopes to emulate that excellent relationship in the Philippines by lending its support to Peugeot's future projects and activities.

Imas cuts through the breeze like a bike

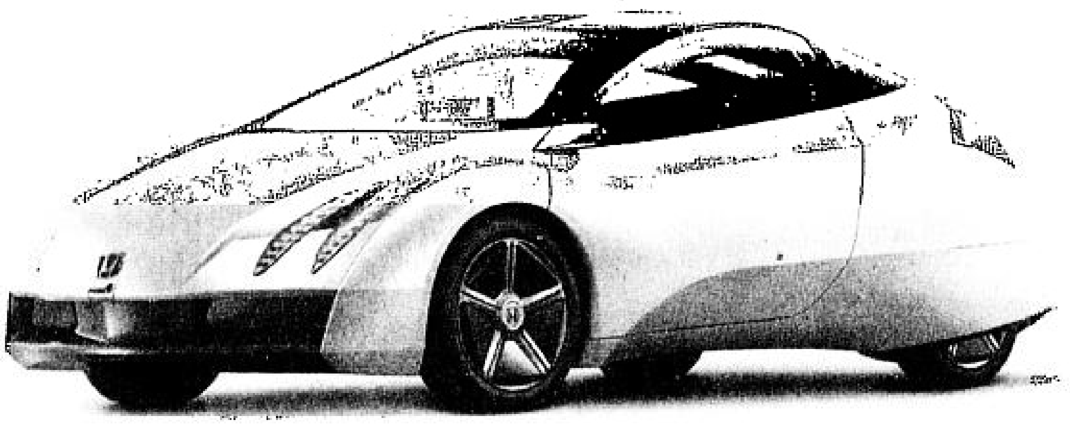
THE BICYCLE: a highly maneuverable, environment-friendly means of transportation that responds to the rider's every whim. The Imas: a sports car designed to provide that same invigorating cutting-through-the-breeze feeling. The design concept was to combine environment-friendly performance with fun-to-drive sports-car performance in an advanced, lightweight, aerodynamic package. The body is made mainly of super-light carbon fiber and aluminum-the overall weight is just 700 kg. A sweeping aerodynamic shape helps achieve a drag coefficient (CD) of just 0.20. The efficient power plant is a refined update of Honda's IMA system. Outstanding aerodynamics, light weight and a "green" power plant for bicycle-like freedom of movement-that's what the new-age lightweight Imas sports car is all about.

Designed to be ultra-light and exceptionally aerodynamic, the IMAS features a carbon fiber body and an ultra-low weight. Sharp exterior lines combine with smooth planes to create an exceptionally wind-cheating form.

Designed for lightness, the interior construction is sparse and reveals the aluminum frame structure, reminiscent of a road racing bicycle with its shining parts shown to full advantage. An ultra-thin, transparent instrument panel and navigation monitor provide precise, comprehensive information, including images from a CCD camera showing what's happening to the sides and rear of the vehicle.

Designed to open wide for maximum loading and unloading convenience, the top-bottom split double tailgate achieves both sophisticated design and functionality.

Honda's IMA system has evolved, becoming even more efficient. Light and aerodynamic, the Imas gets over 40km/liter. Handling is optimized with a shaft-less VGS steering system. Drive-by-wire technology delivers a natural, linear throttle response. Working in perfect synergy, these electronic control technologies produce a crisp, clean driving experience.



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Make your own 2bU! (Part 1)

Weeks ago, we asked our readers to tell us what kind of stories they would publish if they got the chance to be 2bU!'s editor for a day. The ideas poured in and we were bowled over. Injected with your dose of creativity, our writers set out and worked on the suggestions. This week, we present an issue packed with great stories—and they all came from you. This is just the beginning. There will be similar issues in the future. We like giving our readers power. Because 2bU! isn't just ours—it's your section too.

Our "editors" for the week will receive gift packs courtesy of our friends from Globe, the Ayala Cinemas, Godiva, Figaro and Candy Corner.

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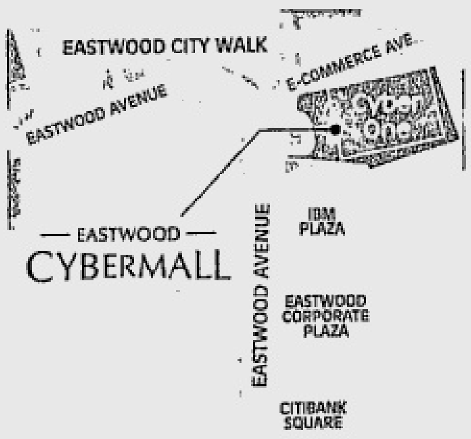

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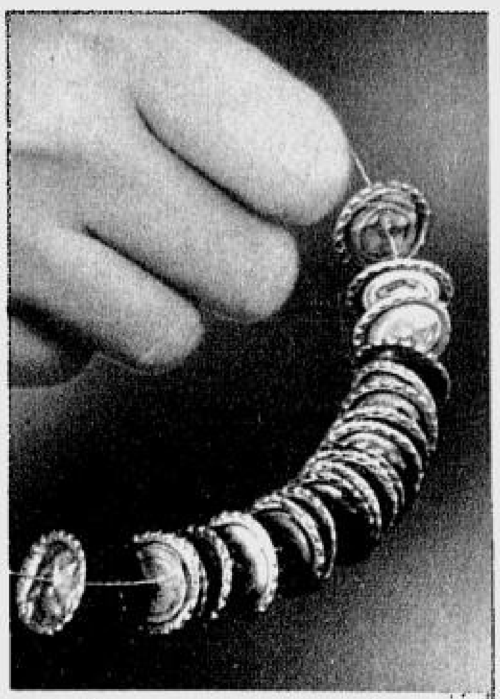

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1	Mr. Suave	*Parokya Ni Edgar*	**TONE MRSUAVE**
2	Spaghetti Song	*Sexbomb*	**TONE SPAG**
3	Happy	*Rolling Stones*	**TONE HAPPY**
4	Maybe	*Enrique Iglesias*	**TONE MAYBE**
5	Where Is The Love	*Black Eyed Peas*	**TONE WERISLUV**
6	I'll Be	*Edwin McCain*	**TONE IBE**
7	Kanlungan	*Noel Cabangon*	**TONE KANLUNGAN**
8	Awit Ng Kabataan	*Rivermaya*	**TONE KABATAAN**
9	Unwell	*Matchbox 20*	**TONE UNWELL**
10	From The Inside	*Linkin Park*	**TONE FROMTHE**
11	Baby I'm In Love	*Thalia*	**TONE BABYIM**
12	Gold	*Spandau Ballet*	**TONE GOLD**
13	Mr. Suave Ver. 2	*Parokya Ni Edgar*	**TONE MRSUAVE2**
14	Get Busy	*Sean Paul*	**TONE GETBUSY**
15	Broken Vow	*Lara Fabian*	**TONE BROKEN**
16	Build Me Up, Buttercup	*Sound Alike*	**TONE BUTTERCUP**
17	I Wanna Be With You	*Mandy Moore*	**TONE WANNABEW**
18	I Want You	*Thalia & Fat Joe*	**TONE IWANTU**
19	Pare Ko	*Eraserheads*	**TONE PAREKO**
20	Make A Wish	*Vic Zhou*	**TONE MAKEWISH**

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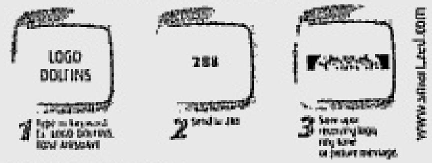

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The brainy bunch

Five young college achievers talk about learning, study habits and what it would take to realize their dreams

Text and photos by Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

IN AN academic environment, students would generally fall into any one of the five general archetypes.

There is the athletic one who gets all the trophies, the popular one who can lead, the quiet one who hones her talent amid the noise, the artistic one who amazes the school with his masterpieces, and, of course, the achievers.

For the last category, school is often a juggling act because being an achiever in school means balancing not only your academics, but also your extra-curricular activities.

Indeed, our notion of intelligence has shifted from just excelling in exams to being a well-rounded person.

It is thus so for these five young students. Hailing from different schools, courses and interests, they have in common a love for learning and the passion to realize their dreams.

Even better, although they may work really hard, they play with equal intensity.

Here are just five of today's brainy bunch:

RIA Sebastian

Ria Mari C. Sebastian

As a junior at UST taking up BS Medical Technology, this 20-year-old is no stranger to stress.

"The learning part is fun, but the memorizing part leaves much to be desired," she says.

Often described as cute and funny by her friends, she confesses to having the voice of a chipmunk or one of those mice from the movie "Babe."

Her artistry and her math skills are a unique combination. And she has recently began dabbling in judo.

"I joined the Pharmacy judo team last semester, but I don't think I was any good at it. When my turn came to fight during our intramurals, it looked like a scene from David and Goliath... only I was Goliath, and down I went," she recalls, laughing.

For her free time, she plays computer games, watches cartoons, and does jigsaw puzzles on the floor ("Hence the flat chest.")

Because she cannot concentrate with noise around her, Ria usually adopts a nocturnal routine by studying very late at night. Learning isn't the only reward she gets from school. "You get to meet a lot of interesting characters, and along the way, your character becomes a little more interesting as well," she notes.

She dreams to be fluent in eight different languages and to discover something and have it named after herself (as long as it's not a disease). After excelling in many fields in her life, it is interesting to know that what she considers her greatest achievement is finally learning how to do a cartwheel, "just when my bones are starting to turn brittle."

Lauro Valente L. Abraham IV

For many, the words Molecular Biology and Biotechnology are intimidating enough. Add the affiliations with the Pre-Medical Honor Society, College of Science Volunteer Corps and the Molecular Biology and Biotechnology Society and you have a major tongue-twister.

"Believe me, these organizations are not as nerdy as they sound," says this university scholar from UP Diliman, who has been nicknamed Sonny for as long as he can remember.

Sonny likens college to Charles Dickens' take on the French Revolution—it is the best of times and the worst of times.

"The best thing about school has nothing to do with academics. It's the everyday human interaction that makes school somewhat appealing, despite the boring lectures and killer tests that we have to face. [The worst thing would] have to be the pressure and the stress that come with schoolwork. Even when you feel like giving up, you still have to keep going. It's frustrating that there have to be tests that supposedly measure the amount of learning that one has achieved, but, yeah, I guess there has to be some kind of standard."

Through the lab reports, tests, all-nighters and cramming, Sonny has learned to cope with stress by distracting himself with other things and later getting the job done. He dreams of being a successful doctor, eventually settling down to raise his own family and have a simple and comfortable life.

His greatest achievement, in non-academic terms, is his two-and-a-half year relationship with his girlfriend. "Not many couples stay together that long nowadays," he says.

SIMONE Lorenzo

Simone Louise Y. Lorenzo

Standing up for one's principles and beliefs may quite rare these days, but it is something that Simone takes to heart.

"I like to argue when I feel strongly about a particular point, sometimes even against my teachers. I take what I learn seriously and often, set standards that are too high," she explains.

This 19-year-old University of Asia and the Pacific sophomore believes that studying goes beyond getting high grades.

"It is, for me, a constant search for knowledge that has meaning. For instance, in Philippine history, we often emphasize the negative impact of the Spanish clergy. Looking at history with these lenses, for me, stripped my Catholic faith of some meaning. It made me look at my faith as something imposed brutally by hypocrites. Real study should also take into account the positive side: the many missionaries who came to the Philippines despite the difficult tropical conditions and the opportunity to go to the Americas, which was where the Spanish gold mine was. Seeing the sacrifices such missionaries made made me value my Catholic heritage more as a Filipino," she says.

"I realized that Christianity in the Philippines was established by sincere men inspired by zeal, despite the sacrifices they had to make."

Her admirable attitude in life also permeates her study habits. When she reads texts for school, she writes on the margin of the material. When studying for tests, she simplifies the lessons by summarizing them on a white board in diagram form.

Her love for learning is evident, but it was a case of nurture vs nature. In grade school, Simone remembers getting an F in Filipino three terms in a row, almost failing Math, and having a teacher who wrote her that she wished she would learn to love history more.

"In other words, I hated school," she says. "Ten years later, I am glad I overcame that and that today, I can say that I love to learn. That, so far is what I consider my greatest achievement."

LARS Co

Larissa Louise Y. Co

If someone comes up to Lars and asks how she deals with stress, she'll say, "I close my eyes and wish it would go away... and when I open my eyes and realize it's still there, I manage it. Most people say I let off steam, but after the initial eruption, I start working."

And work she does. As a high school senior at the Immaculate Conception Academy where she is a consistent honor student, Lars juggles her schoolwork with the Debate Team, the school paper that she edits and the Social Action Student Staff where she is the operations officer.

Her interests cover a broad spectrum, from reading, listening to music, painting, writing or crocheting during her free time.

She describes herself as a bundle of contradictions—"Learning something new is always interesting, regardless of what the topic is. But when it comes to hitting the books for tests, I don't like it. It puts too much pressure on me to memorize every single unimportant detail, which I'll probably only retain for the duration of the exam."

Her idealism and her enthusiasm show through her dreams. "I want the Philippines to improve! I'm not kidding. I really really really want to do something that would make things better. I want to invent something, help out an organization, run a business or even just pay correct taxes and do my share to help the country," she says.

With an ambition that lies somewhere between genetic engineering and food technology, Lars clearly has the drive and the attitude to make her dreams come true.

JOSEPH Echevarria

Joseph Patrick D. Echevarria

In his own words: "*May tumawag na sa aking 'kalog.' Siguro nga kalog ako. May tumawag na rin sa aking 'seryoso.' Siguro nga seryoso ako. Mukha atang 'seryosong-kalog' ako.*"

Patrick balances a tough course (BS Physics and Computer Engineering) at the Ateneo de Manila University with his work with many student organizations, plus he teaches and is currently involved in creating a Tutoring Database, forming a Physics Reading Group, and giving tutorials in math and science to the son of the school librarian. Whew!

"*Sobrang dami ng trabaho sa Ateneo,*" he says. "*Mabigat ang* stress *at kadalasan kulang ako sa tulog. Pero may panahon pa rin ako para sa aking pamilya at sa aking mga kaibigan.* Iyan ang greatest achievement *ko. Mas pinahahalagahan ko pa rin ang pamilya at kaibigan kaysa sa trabaho at pag-aaral.*"

Patrick has many ways to deal with stress: "Sleeping is very effective! Problems always seem easier in the morning after a good night's rest. Doing push-ups is also a good outlet for stress. But if all else fails, I pray and let God take care of it."

He tries to learn the subject well, to the extent that he is able to teach it. Living alone in the dorm has allowed him a certain level of independence, and now, he does not follow a strict schedule.

Hard work has certainly paid off for this honor student. But at the same time, he is also trying to find his mission.

"I want a lot of things. But I don't know what God will ask me to do. In the meantime, I'm preparing as hard as I can."

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com

"Ask them about the lighter side of their life, their hang-outs, their gigs. Ask them for study tips," Earl Tongol said about his idea to feature top students from different schools.

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2BU! SURVEY

Surprise secrets of weight watchers

Text and photos by Giles Ivan Aquino
2bU! Correspondent

2BU! asked how the other people are doing with their own fight with weight loss and their secret in maintaining their figures. And boy, some are just plain lucky.

"The best *talaga* is to jog e... *kahit* five kilometers a day . *Tapos siyempre, tamang* diet. *Tapos* take *diet supplement. Siguro kaya na 'yun ng* 30 minutes or less. Not too much junk food and fatty food."—**Karl Chua, 24**

"I have the usual—high protein, low carbs. Nothing after 6 (p.m.). Exercise, exercise, then fluid. Then avoid eating out with friends. Eating at home is better." —**Nino Magallanes, 25**

JAE Pickrell

"I always look at the nutrition facts at the back of everything I consume. The only part that really concerns me is how much fat there is. Before I was not aware how much fat I was consuming, so now I make it a part of my routine, be it snack or heavy meal."—**Mark Siongco, 20**

"First, I only eat a cup of rice a day usually during lunch. Second, I only drink water (room temperature) during and in between meals. Water definitely is the best choice of fluids! Third, no snacks. I only eat when I'm hungry. Fourth, I stay away from sweets and salty food (like chips). And last but not the least, I busy myself with work—this way my mind is kept off from eating."—**Joyann Macaso, 25**

"I had to cut down on my rice intake, because too much of it did not only make me feel bloated and sluggish all day, it also added pouches on my tummy and the area around my waist."—**Hazel Silvestre, 23**

ARIS Mondragon

"There are many key factors that have helped me lose weight: discipline, eating sensibly, exercise, motivation and patience. It is also important to have self-confidence, self-control, positive thinking and a healthy outlook on life in order to achieve results.—**Angela Garcia, 23**

"Party hard! You lose calories that way."—**Jae Pickrell, 17**

"I eat a lot but I party hard! Haha!"—**Trisha Daligdig, 20**

"Study shows that because muscle burns calories and body fat does not, the more lean muscle mass in your body and the lower amount of fat means that you will burn more calories during physical activity.

YOLY Siytiap

"Additionally, the more muscle mass you have, the more calories you will burn when you are sitting in a chair, cooking dinner or sleeping."—**Karlo Bonifacio, 22**

"Don't be too choosy with food, just eat right. Hit the gym at least once a week. Get enough rest after *gimmicks*, and laugh a lot."—**Aris Mondragon, 26**

"I try not to eat anything three hours before bed."—**Dazzle Raymundo, 22**

"I lift weights 75 percent of the time, and do aerobic exercises 25 percent of the time. That way I gain muscle, which helps increase my metabolism. I get my carbs from my veggies. I avoid rice. I load up on meat. I get rid of all visible fat and I literally spit out fat even when it's already in my mouth."—**Macky Callo, 27**

TRISHA

"I work out in the gym at least three times a week. My office is about one kilometer away from the fitness center. I walk to get there as part of my routine. I walk a lot."—**Darcy F. Lopez, 30**

"I exercise regularly. Run about 30 minutes at least twice a week. Play baseball every weekend, which involves three hours of play and a lot of running.—**Bacchus Ledesma, 27**

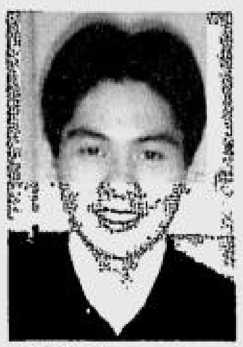
"Try managing a store during December—you'll lose weight whether you like it or not."—**Yoly Siytiap, 24**

KARLO Bonifacio

KAY Flores

DARCY Lopez

HAZEL Silvestre



MARK Siongco

DAZZLE Raymundo

"I don't take the escalator most of the time."—**Pia Alejandro, 23**

"My diet plan is I eat whatever I want! But after a big meal, I cut back on my next few meals or I put in extra time during my workout. I hate to exercise, but I have to because I eat so much. I will probably be the size of Moby Dick if I quit working out. I don't go to the gym because I'm too lazy. Simple walking, light weights and toning exercises work for me. Also, playtime with my baby Kaiya can be a full body workout."—**Kay Flores, 24**

"I only eat breakfast and lunch. I skip dinner. If ever I eat at night, I only eat bread."—**Samuel Belarde, 23**

"My schedule is crazy. The only reason why I'm not gaining weight is because I don't have enough sleep."—**Katie Adriano, 23**

"I'm a very active person. Being part of a dance class has kept my weight at a level."—**JM Manapul, 23**

"Stress. If I eat a lot *basta* stressed *mabilis makapayat*."—**Maan Belano, 23**

"Less TV. More sleep."—**Dino Sarmiento, 23**

Watch your fat and calorie intake, sleep a lot, party a lot and play with your kid

SANDRO Ledesma, 16, from De La Salle Zobel, wanted us to give tips for people who want to lose weight. We had the perfect correspondent who could work on this article. Giles Aquino's own successful battle against unwanted pounds is so inspiring that he makes the rest of us want to get in shape too.

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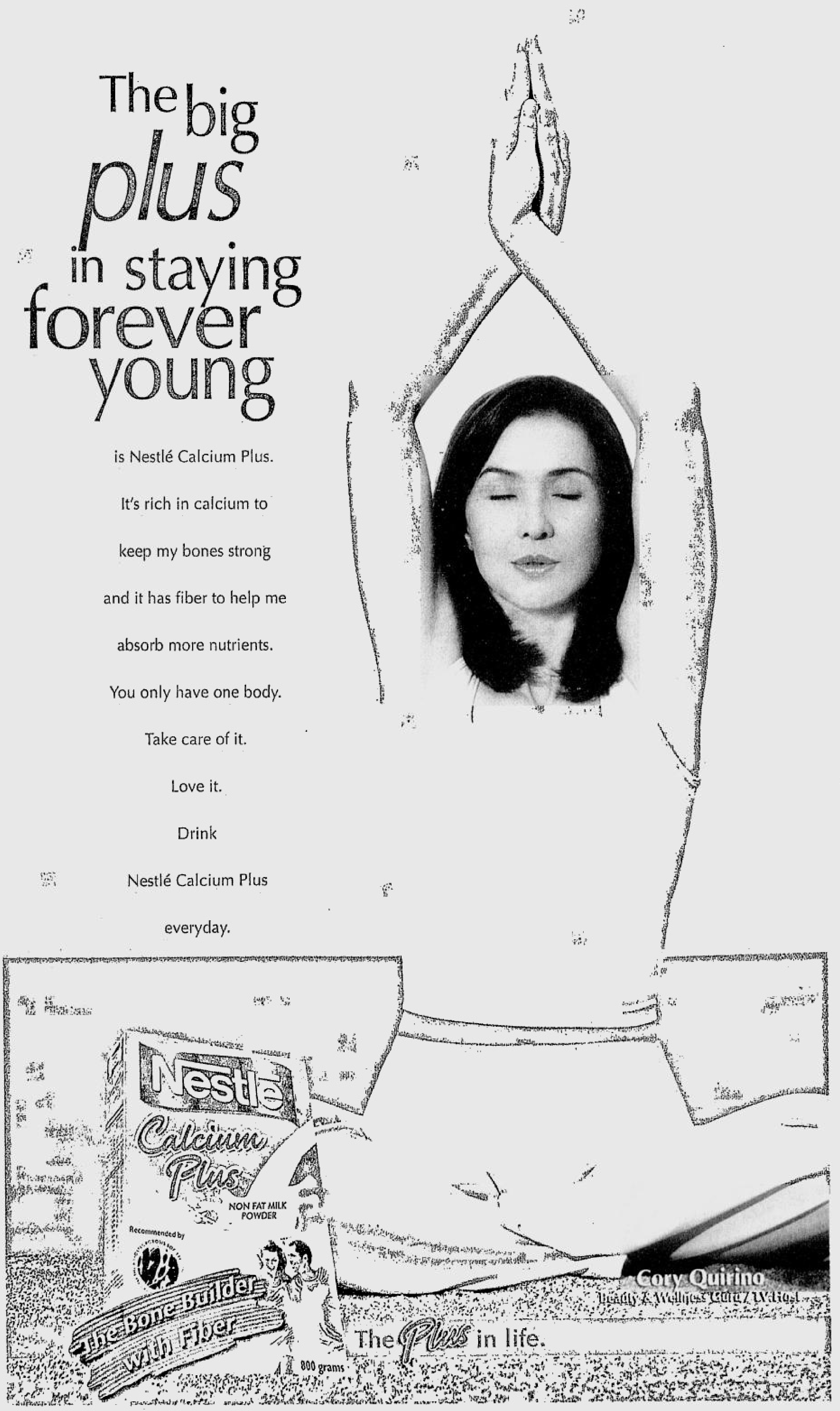

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INFORMATICS

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Elimination Rounds
Dec. 3 UP Diliman & Adamson University
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Dec 12,19 20 & 22 9pm **Backburner featuring DJ Ricky Stone**
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Dec 12 (Fri): Olive, Makati
Dec 19 (Fri): Temple, Makati
Dec 20 (Sat): Basement, Eastwood
Dec 22 (Mon): Altitude Bar, Tomas Morato
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Dec 17 Wed 7pm **Lord Of The Rings 3: Return of the King @ Robinson's Galleria Cinema 2 and Glorietta 4**
Gentxt presents the long-awaited final installment of the LOTR trilogy.
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Dec 18 Thurs 9pm **Christmas Wave @ Dish, Rockwell Power Plant**
Featuring Nyoy Volante, Jimmy Bondoc and Arnee Hidalgo
*First 50 Gentxters to flash their Gentxt card, Globe Handyphone and a valid ID to get free entrance (VIP area) and a free drink.

Dec 20 Sat 8pm **DE-ICE @ Fort Bonifacio Global City**
Featuring Paolo Santos, Rivermaya, Jay R, Noel Cabangon, Sugar Free and Razorback
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The 'secret' lives of teachers

MARJORIE Pascua

By Katrina Denoga
2bU! Correspondent

LOVE them or hate them, teachers have a big impact on your life. But do you ever think of them as human beings who have a life?

2bU! talked to four young women to get the lowdown on why they are not in the higher paying corporate world, what makes them tick, what keeps them going, and what they do away from school.

Liza Galvez, 25

Prep adviser, Bethany Montessori Learning Center

Why did you become a teacher and how long have you been in the job?

I've only been a teacher since June. I became a teacher by chance. I needed a job near my house.

What's the best and worst thing about the job?

The best and worst are the kids. The best because kids are not like grown-ups, they're not mean, there's no back-biting. They're honest. When they say 'I love you' you know they mean it. When they're having temper tantrums, when they get bored and don't want to listen, that's the worst.

After work, I go out with friends. I love to read but I don't have time anymore. I love surfing the Net. I hang out with my sisters and co-teachers.

What books would you recommend?

I like the "Twisted" series of Jessica Zafra and, of course, the Harry Potter series. And the books "The Alchemist" and "By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept" by Paolo Coelho.

What would you like to accomplish before you die?

I'd like to get my master's and doctorate degrees. I'd like to improve the school, make a contribution to the community make a difference (in the lives of) the children.

What's on your Christmas wish list?

I want to shop to death. When I go to a mall, I want to be able to get what I want, not just for myself but for others. And I want world peace—that makes me sound like a beauty pageant contestant.

If you weren't a teacher, you'd be:

A marketing specialist.

Sona Daval-Santos, 26

English and social studies, grade school

How did you get into teaching? How long have you been a teacher?

After graduation, I got married. I was supposed to stay at home but after my daughter turned one, I really wanted to work. I come from a family of teachers, and my mom encouraged me to teach. But because there were so many requirements, I went back to school first. I've been teaching for four years.

What's the best and worst thing about the job?

The best is the interaction with the kids. The worst is when your principles conflict with those of some colleagues.

What do you like to do in your own time?

I sing, usually in school. It's the one thing I enjoy. At home I like reading books like "The Good Earth" by Pearl Buck, "Memoirs of a Geisha" by Arthur Golden and, most of all, the works of Jane Austen. I also do house chores.

If you could turn back the clock, would you wait a few years before marrying?

I'd do it again. I have no regrets. Nobody forced me, it was my choice.

What gives you the most joy?

My family and teaching.

Are you optimistic about the future of our country?

There's always hope. (Laughs) But I'm not hoping so much. I'm planning to go abroad within five years. If [it doesn't happen], then maybe never. It's more for my daughter.

For Christmas, you'd want:

Time to spend with the family. A new car—a green Honda City.

If you weren't a teacher, you'd be:

A singer or a theater actress.

Marjorie Ann Pascua, 22,

Physical education, health and humanities (PE-HH), high school, Blessed Trinity School

What made you choose teaching?

I didn't want to be a teacher initially. My grandmother is a teacher and encouraged me to take up education at the Philippine National University. I've been teaching for two years.

The best and worst about your job are:

The best thing is when you see your students learning not just basketball or volleyball, but developing ideas, an outlook in life. I guess the worst is... there are students that you think aren't learning anything, they don't pay attention and don't seem to like you.

What do you do during long breaks?

They are the best time. There are offers for me to teach swimming and to do other part-time jobs but, as much as possible, I allot the time for myself. I go swimming, hiking and mountain climbing.

What's your favorite sport?

Basketball and swimming. In college, my friends and I joined basketball competitions in school.

Your best mountain climbing experience was in:

Louisiana, Laguna.

What do you do for fun?

I like to talk and share ideas with other people. While I am at ease being alone and I like to (mentally) balance myself, it is *kung meron akong kausap*.

If you could do anything, you would:

Change people's status. *Yung walang mataas, walang mababa.*

For Christmas, you want:

Peace of mind. I'm happy, but it seems I'm always rushing... I want some quiet time.

If you weren't a teacher, you'd be:

A nurse.

Jing Panganiban, 24

Filipino literature, Ateneo de Manila University

Why did you become a teacher and how long have you been at it?

I have been teaching for three years now, and it is a love-hate relationship. Maybe teaching is my karma for having been a nasty and lazy student. I told myself that, next to being a toll gate attendant, I'd never get into teaching.

But after graduation, I realized I wanted to take writing seriously and I needed a job conducive to writing. I was offered a teaching position by Benilda Santos, a respected writer, and the rest is, as they say, history.

What is the best and worst thing about your job?

The best thing is knowing that I am part of something noble. When you teach, you [are] molding [the minds of] your students. You feel you're part of something great.

The worst thing is students who think they are too smart... I don't want to hurt their feelings but I know [they] will [have more] trouble if [they keep that] illusion. It's also hard to keep repeating yourself. I used to teach two different subjects per semester to avoid the monotony of repeating the same lesson in three or four classes.

What do you do in your spare time?

I used to coordinate literary projects, but not anymore out of respect for Ateneo which made me a a full-time teacher this year. I constantly need to do something interesting, so I have turned to making crystal bracelets and earrings, which I sell. This is how I unwind. I am thinking of bringing my work to some stores.

Are you optimistic about the future of our country?

I am optimistic about everything. There's a lot of hope because everyone can make a change to make the Philippines a better place.

What do you do for fun?

I watch movies and go malling/shopping with my fiancé Gil. It's not fun without him. I also make crystal bracelets and earrings.

What do you usually do during long breaks?

Teach! I have a summer teaching load. I sometimes go on vacation with my family. When there are no classes, I sleep for 14-16 hours straight.

What would you like to accomplish before you die?

Be a doting child to my parents, a loving wife, a good mother, an accomplished writer.

What do you want for Christmas?

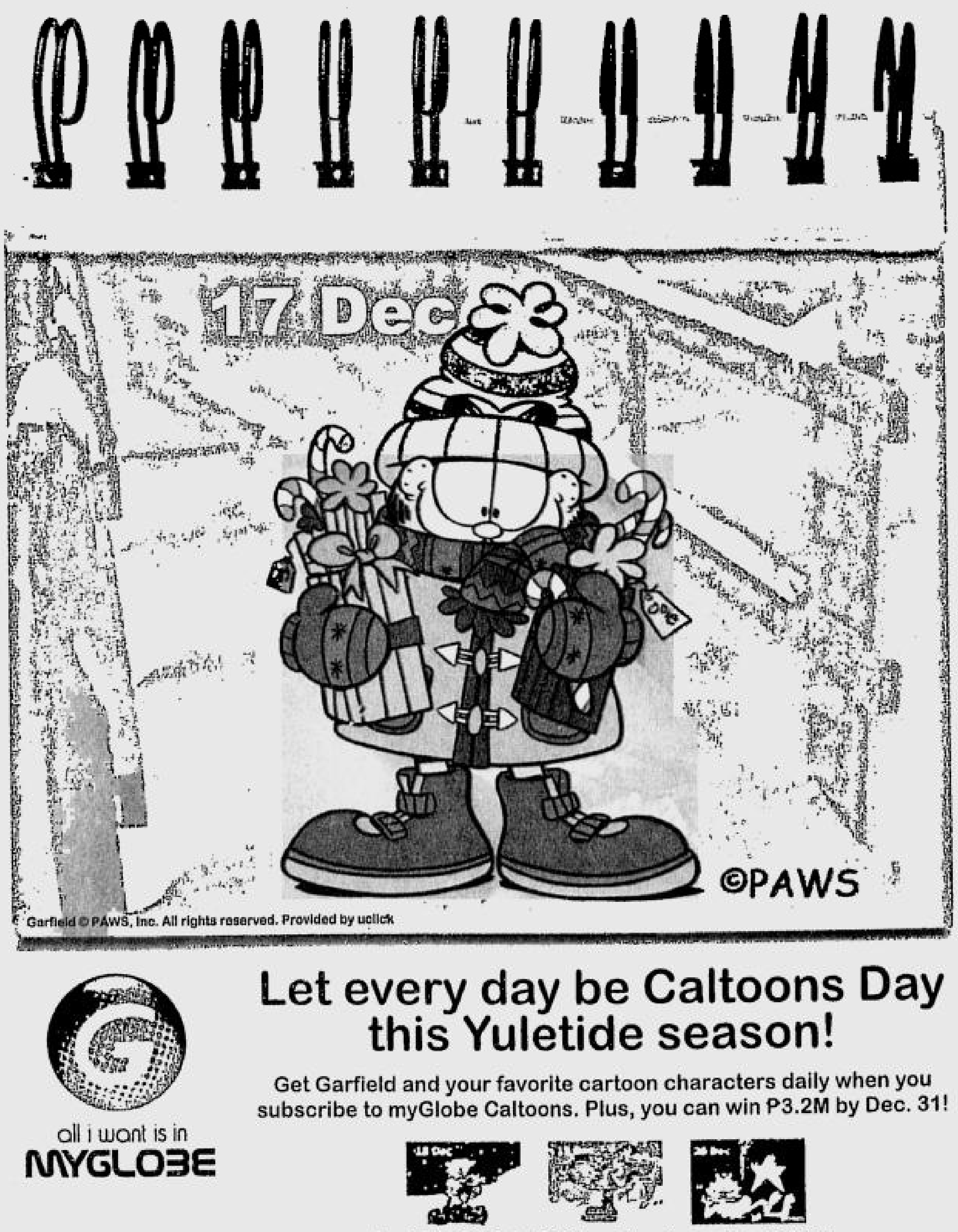
I want all my accessories sold! Just kidding. I wish my personal problems will go down the drain. I wish for a happy and harmonious life for my family and a prosperous and peaceful existence for my friends. I also want to finish my masteral thesis this Christmas break.

SONA Daval-Santos

JING Panganiban

LIZA Galvez

23-YEAR-OLD Sheila Salameda wanted a story on young teachers. "If I would be given a chance to become an editor for a day, I would make an article about young educators like me... share my views and ideas and how noble it is to be a part of this profession."



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'Kikay' quick fixes

Vanity Fare

Lora Gabol

Here are beauty shortcuts that minimize primping time by half, yet yield pretty much the same results

I NEVER considered myself high maintenance. I'm pretty much a "wash-and-wear" kind of girl who pampers herself once in a while.

Recently, though, I realized that I can't even afford my "once in a while" salon and spa trips anymore. And I have the hangnails and overgrown eyebrows to prove it!

Yes, I am officially a busy girl. Time is my (currently) elusive luxury. It's funny how, of all things, one long, hard look at the mirror made me realize this.

Lucky for us who live by the "I-don't-have-time" mantra, there are shortcuts by which those who can't spare a minute can minimize primping time by half (or even more), yet yield pretty much the same results.

Okay, okay, they're more like quick fixes, really, but these techniques can help you pull off temporary remedies to beauty dilemmas—at least until you find time to sit in a salon chair.

Dark undereye circles

Kikay Rx: The only way you can permanently banish this common beauty nightmare is through a thorough regimen—application of eye gel in the morning and before bedtime, sufficient sun protection, lots of water, a healthy diet, and, of course, enough sleep.

In the meantime ... Agua is free. Eating right, well, negotiable. But for some unfortunate ones (myself included), there is just no way we can vacation in DreamLand for eight hours straight! Just thinking about it makes me guilty. Sure, there is always concealer, but even that takes up precious time.

Quick fix: Put on some blush! Dark circles appear darker on pale skin—the price we have to pay for stress and a lack of rest.

"Faking" a rosy glow will draw attention away from your raccoon eyes, so get in the pink with natural shades. Use a liquid stain or a cream formula for the best flush. My current fave? Smashbox Blush Stick in Smashing Heat.

You can also try Pout Flush Blush in Wild Berries or the very affordable HerBench Pretty When Pinched in its new liquid formulation (very BeneTint!).

Zit attack

Kikay Rx: When your schedule just won't allow regular trips to the derma but accommodates that killer zit when it pays a visit, you can always pencil in a "quick" cortisone shot.

Other busy people, of course, have the same game plan in mind, so the 15 minutes you allotted for your beauty "shortcut" would inevitably stretch out to an hour of standing in line at the derma's clinic. So much for saving time.

Quick fix: Spot-treat the offending pimple with salicylic acid or benzoyl peroxide. Let me stress the word "spot." Do not treat unaffected areas unless you want dry, flaky, red skin.

For an even faster remedy, why not try putting on "fresh" makeup? Don't layer on foundation, concealer and powder. You will only succeed in making breakouts more obvious, not to mention possibly trigger another.

Use concealer sparingly, set with translucent powder, and put focus on fresh color. Use lilac or mint green on your eyes (Maybelline's Color Contrast Eye Shadow comes in solos and trios you can mix and match) and apply tinted gloss. That pimple will be sorry it even made an appearance.

Discolored teeth

Kikay Rx: So your iced tea and coffee addiction has finally manifested itself on your pearly whites—which are more like pearly yellows now.

If you have the money and a couple of hours of free time, you can go for laser teeth whitening at the many dental clinics offering the service around the metro. But my guess is you don't.

Quick fix: Why not make it a gradual process with an at-home whitening product like Colgate Simply White? It might take a couple of weeks to a month, but at least you'll have minimum damage to your bank account, and will only take about a couple of minutes a day from your busy schedule.

Still that time-and-money *kuripot*? Slick on a blue-red lipstick. This color gives the illusion of whiter teeth. Shu Uemura's Rouge 4 in 194 and L'Oreal Invincible Platinum are great choices. And oh, you might want to lay off the caffeine for a while.

Red, bloodshot eyes

Kikay Rx: Again, get your forty winks! Also, you might want to lay off the alcohol and the smoking if you notice that your eyes get irritated the morning after a big drink-and-smoke-all-you-can bash.

Quick fix: Sure, there's always Visine. But what if you run out and just have to look like you have the clearest, brightest peepers for a date or an important event?

Navy liner is your best bet. This shade will instantly wake up those post-night out eyes by helping give the illusion of whiter eye "whites."

Try Wet n' Wild Pencil Liner. You can also use some cool-toned shadow like light pastel blue or even green. Visit the Origins counter for pretty eye shadow shades, or try their Underwear for the Eyes that come in cool frosted colors that are sheer enough for day.

Stay away from pink and red tones though, especially if you're on the fair side. They tend to make eyes look puffy.

Bushy brows

Kikay Rx: Threading or waxing are the best techniques to get perfectly groomed brows. These salon services really clean up the area and shape the prefect arches to frame any face.

But what if a salon appointment is out of the question? Tweezing will tide you over for a while, but if you're tweezer-phobic like a lot of people I know, the sudden overgrowth of hair above your eyes can pose a problem.

Quick fix: Brush up those stray strands with clear mascara and try to tweeze obvious stubble. Better yet, get yourself Shu Uemura's Eyebrow Manicure in the shade that perfectly matches your brows. This wonder product gives brows shape without the need for bow pencil or powder, so you save yourself a lot of time and complicated know-how.

Rough, blotchy skin

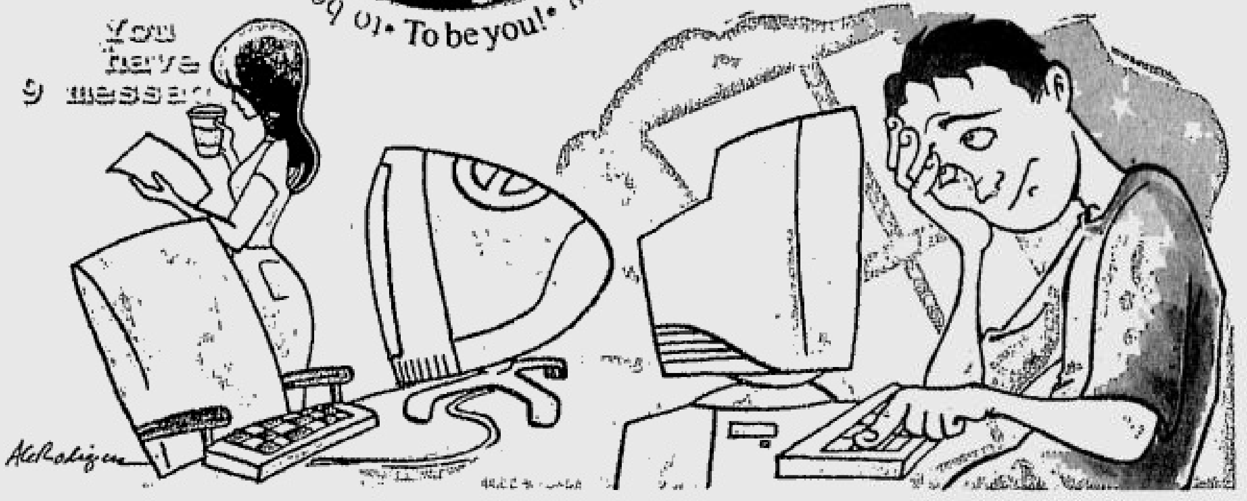
Kikay Rx: An intensive facial is the way to go if you want a smooth, rosy, flawless face. Microdermabrasion at the derma (Vicki Belo Clinics offer this service at an affordable rate!) will boost sluggish circulation, get rid of dead skin cells and impurities, and polish your complexion.

Quick fix: Treat your complexion with a gentle scrub twice a week or invest in a home "microdermabrasion" system like Estee Lauder's Thermal Refinisher that smoothens skin in an instant-without the professional treatment.

You might also want to include a peel-off face mask in your skin care regimen. Freeman Silk-a-Peel Face Mask with Cucumber, Melon and Ginseng lifts off dry patches and moisturizes skin like magic.

Shu Uemura, Origins, Estee Lauder at Rustan's Tower Makati; Maybelline, L'Oreal, Wet n' Wild at PCX and leading Department Stores; Smashbox, Pout at Beauty Bar Glorietta 3 and Rockwell Powerplant; Vicki Belo services, 0917-8913762 (Greenhills) or 0917-8409268 (Tektite).

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com



Writer doesn't reply to his e-mails

Niño Mark Sablan & September Mabino

DEAR Mark and Sep,

My problem is not about love. It is about friendship. It all started four years ago when I sent her an e-mail of appreciation for her article published in the papers. For two years, we regularly exchanged e-mails. Then one weekend, I failed to receive an e-mail from her. Thinking that she was just too busy with her studies, I sent her some words of encouragement but still there was no reply.

Since then, I've been sending her an e-mail practically begging her to tell me what went wrong so I would not commit the same mistake in the future. Or if she does not like to communicate with me ever, she can say it so and she would not hear from me again. I am bothered because I value her friendship that much.

I know I have the right e-mail address because every time her article is published, her e-mail address is also printed at the end of it.

LEO

Applause for beings like you who treasure friendships the way you do. Not easily giving up on someone is an indication of how willing you are to always be there for the special people in your life. However, there is the bitter and sad reality that other beings aren't as enthusiastic and loyal as you are.

Two years of e-mail exchange is something definitely serious. It may not be as serious as marriage, but it is serious nevertheless. Going online and sending you e-mail or even simply replying to your letters means you are important. It means she looks at you not just as a fan. With all these said, I believe you deserve an explanation from her, whether it is to tell you did something wrong or she doesn't want anything to do with you anymore. However, it is also her right to choose not to get in touch with you anymore, whatever the reason behind is. As much as informing you about your shortcoming or mistake would prove to be beneficial, maybe she believes you yourself should know when you're already crossing the line or committing a mistake, without anybody telling you.

Then again, maybe you're just extremely impatient and demanding, forgetting the fact that she is a busy bee.

MARK

It's nice you value your friendship a lot and you don't give up on things easily, but I have to agree with what Mark has said. I'm sorry to say that you cannot force an explanation from the girl on why she's not replying to your e-mails, no matter how much you deserve one—and I believe that you do. Keeping out of touch and keeping silent are the choices she has made and we have to respect that. Not to mention that we can't really do anything about it.

Don't forget, though, that you were simply e-mail pals. You seemed to have invested way too much into this relationship, which could have made her uncomfortable. I suggest you give her time and stop bugging her with e-mails asking the same perplexed questions. It's very possible that annoyance is what's keeping her from answering.

Or maybe she simply can't accommodate you because she's busy.

For now, try to stop thinking about the girl and, instead, enjoy the company of your other friends. Allow her the space she's practically making you give her. And give yourself a break from the mental anguish you're causing yourself. Who knows, you might be surprised one day by your e-mail account telling you, "You've got mail," and it will be from her.

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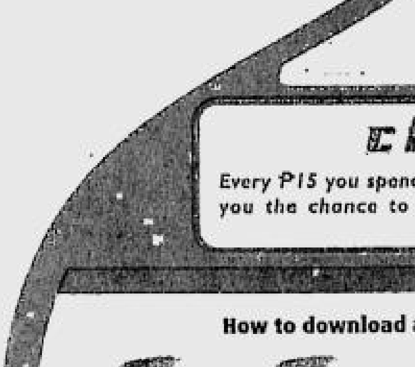
What if Frodo fails to destroy the One Ring?

"THEN Frodo stirred and spoke in a clear voice, indeed with a voice clearer and more powerful than Sam had ever heard him use, and it rose above the throb and turmoil of Mount Doom, ringing in the roof and walls.



"I have come," he said. "But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not destroy it, the Ring is mine!" And suddenly, as he set it on his finger, he vanished from Sam's sight. Sam gasped, but he had no chance to cry out, for at that moment, many things happened."—Mount Doom, from *The Return of the King*

2bU! thanks the hundreds of Tolkien followers who joined the trivia contest. Congratulations to all winners. See you this Friday!

Lawyers.com.ph, New Line Cinema and Pioneer Films in cooperation with the Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2bU!, INQUIRER Libre, Saturday Super Special, Sinutab Capsules by Pfizer—*Ginhawa sa baradong* sinuses and Royal Tru Dalandan present the Special Advanced Screening of "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" on December 19, 2003 7:30 p.m. at Robinson's MovieWorld Galleria Cinema 2, for the benefit of the Quezon City Scholarship and Youth Development Program-Office of the City Mayor. Also presented in part by C Interactive Digital Entertainment. Prepare for "The Return of the King": Buy original VHS, DVD and VCD of "LOTR: The Two Towers"; and Comfort Fabric Conditioner and the Hobbit House, the only restaurant in the world owned, managed and staffed by hobbits.

"LOTR: The Return of the King" is the wildly anticipated final installment of the epic three-part film by Peter Jackson and New Line Cinema. This movie is subject to the rating by the MTRCB.

'Return of the King' contest

Here are the answers to last week's questions:

1. Oliphaunts
2. Denethor
3. Eowyn

This week's winner is Joey Cruz. Please claim your tickets at the PDI Lifestyle office. Look for Ruth Navarra or Pam Pastor, and please bring a valid ID.

SUPERFRIENDS. Tonj Paguio and Camille Rodriguez play up their superhero faves.

RED-HOT planet in boracay. Patrick Higgs, Club Paradiso (the former Bazzura) owner

BORACAY BUDDY. Alvin Barbasa at the DJ's booth

CLUB PARADISO. Jon Antonio and Kat Tan

PHOTOS BY TIM YAP

WHEN I think about you I touch myself...

Booze cruise

Tim Yap

IN the middle of the dance floor, Wonder Woman mingles with Robin as an American cowboy hanging by the bar eyes one or both of them.

Whether you're a predator or prey, roles are reversed—and counter-reversed—in this Boracay hot spot known for all-night dancing, cruising and boozing. Club Bazzura, the Boracay party institution, lives on.

At the end of this month, Bazzura will evolve into the same haven for partyphiles, only with a different screen name: Club Paradiso. It will be the rebirth of party life this side of Boracay, where Manilans will flock this holiday season.

And why not? There's nothing like the sandy shores of this beach. It's the perfect place to be to witness the first sunrise of 2004.

For this club renaissance, owner **Patrick Higgs** hired UK DJ **Ricky Stone**—a veteran of the Miss Moneypenny's, Slinky and Ministry of Sound scene—for two months, to play for all you music and party-hungry folks out there.

Wanna sample his music? Check out DJ Ricky of Club Paradiso as he spins his tunes at Temple this Friday night.

iPod's pad

Speaking of Greenbelt hot spots, last weekend's crowd at Nuvo was a mix of *balikbayans* and savvy scenesters out on the prowl. The reason? It was Big Fish's first lady **Joanne Quintas Primero**'s birthday bash, and iPod's coming-out party!

It's all "Nice!"—what a befitting name for the series of parties that the guys at Big Fish throw for "Addicts" every first payday of the month. Last Friday, the Addicts were treated to a special 25-percent discount on that must-have musical gadget called the iPod. I wanted to get one, but I think it was sold out already by the time I arrived.

I also spotted scenester **Louie Ang**, who has made Greenbelt his home (because of the nightly parties that Big Fish holds for precious Addict subscribers) and indeed, he was having his music fix that night.

It was an evening of mayhem and all things new and happening. On the other side of the fence, **Stephanie Zubiri** and **Giselle Tongi** played chef and bartender, respectively, at Resto 12. The energy was diverse, yet pleasant.

A fresh vibe is surrounding the scene, what with new people, places and events. It's too early to look back on 2003—because you'll never know what will happen yet and we still have two weeks left before the year says bye-bye.

Revelry without a pause

James Dean meets the Prom Queen? Yup, that's what's happening this Friday at V! The follow-up to the **Madonna** Icon party, it's set to become a party without a pause for rebels without a cause. Revelry starts at 10 p.m. and lasts till dawn.

It's Olive's closing party this Saturday the 20th. Okay, before you say, "Again!"—I know it has had so many closing parties but according to the owners, this is the real thing—the final chapter of the club formerly known as Orange. So relive all your ecstatic memories of fun and frolic inside the club where you had your longest "joy rise!"

Also on Saturday, SMB Play and BBC host an all-nighter music and boozefest at Salon Prive (yup, **Geoff Simpson**'s posh parlor), that's at the 29/L of Fraser Place, Valero St., Makati. Expect heavy boogie music (UK, Australia, Japan, New York) with resident **Kristian Hernandez** aka Audio K. "It's by-invite only—no invite, no entry—so if they don't have invites, they should look for us at V and ask us," said BBC's **Mike Constantino**. And that's not a pick-up line, mind you.

Why should you go there? "It's open bar the whole night—our treat for all our friends," says BBC's sultry siren **Kara Tolentino**.

There. Enough said.

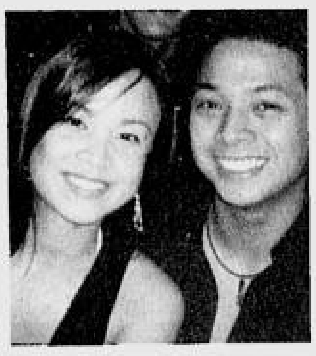
Have a super holiday season, partyphiles.

STYLE TATTLE. Leica Carpo and Anton San Diego in Boracay

This month, Bazzura evolves into a hotter haven for partyphiles: Club Paradiso

DEVIL BEWARE. Paolo Gimenez camps it up.

BACK IN TOWN. Jessica Guevarra's sexy, New York vibe


WAZZUP "PARE?" Hilary Favila and Drew Arellano

SCENE ADDICTS. Thomas Elspermann and Elaine Matawaran

DJ BIG SHOTS. Tuck Cheah and Mark Naval

GODDESSES. Jackie Forster and Joanne Quintas at Joanne's birthday bash at Nuvo

MOBILE MANIA. Jojo Manlongat and Ash Mirpuri

JUST shop in Sari-Sari with Jenni Epperson and GP Reyes.

LOVIN' IT. Ed Aniel and Tonj

SMART Buddy GSM Pre-paid
zed Newlist

Silent Night	Destiny's Child	TONE SILENTN
Deck The Halls	Neil Diamond	TONE DECKTHE
The Chipmunk Song	The Chipmunks	TONE CHIPMUNK
I'll Be Home For Christmas	Traditional	TONE ILLBE
Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas	Traditional	TONE HAVEUR
Fallen	Sarah McLachlan	TONE FALLEN
Trouble	Pink	TONE TROUBLEP
Bakit Inibig Pa Kita	Lodine Roxas	TONE BAKITIBIG
Behind Blue Eyes	Limp Bizkit	TONE BEHINDB
Hey Whatever	Westlife	TONE HEYWHAT

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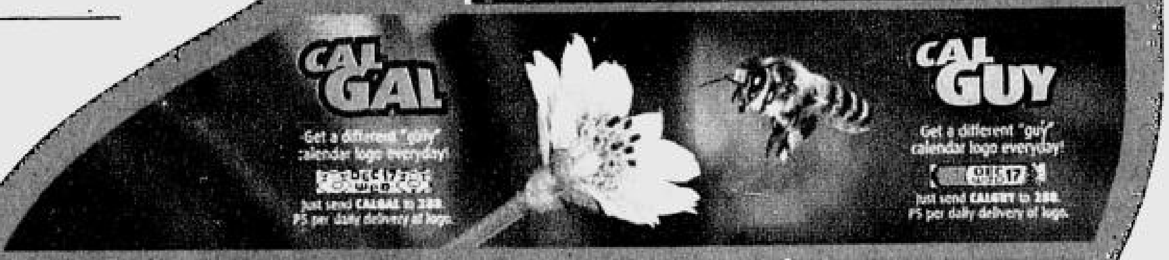
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3787. Series of 2003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LIFESTYLE

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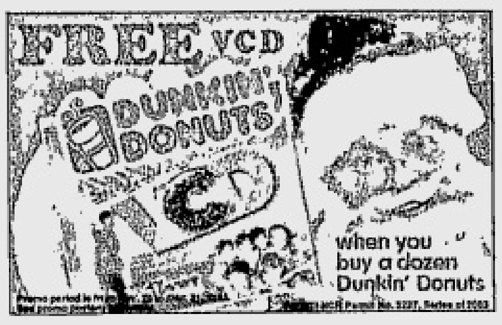
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VCD
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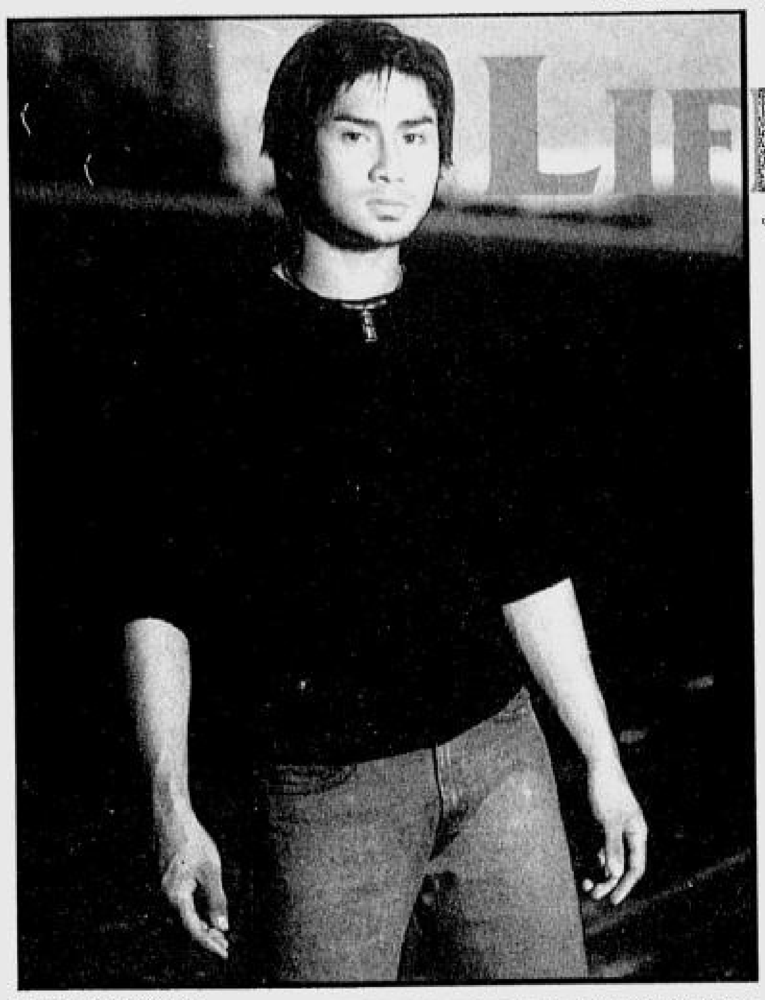

BEATBOX MIKE

The Akafellas make beautiful music. And no, they're not a boy band

Pop-cappella on the tracks

Sixteen-year-old Sandro Ledesma from De La Salle Zobel wanted a story on the Akafellas. Hans Enverga, 21, of the Ateneo de Manila University, who is passionate about trains, wanted 2bU! to have a pictorial at a train station. We did both.

Text by Maui V. Reyes
Photos by Aldwin Aspillera
Styled by Shahani Gania
ALL CLOTHES BY FOLDED AND HUNG

WE'RE in the middle of the Tayuman train station, taking photos of Red and Roger when three men run after one another on the opposite side of the tracks, carrying rusty bolos. Two of them catch up with the first one, and they start whacking him

POP/ E2

onstage 2nyt

Cowboy Grill	Cowboy Grill	Cowboy Grill
LAS PIÑAS ☎ 801.7644	SERSIDE ICE KENDI	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
MABINI ☎ 525.1474	MIXED-UP M PEOPLE/PUZZLES	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 6AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
MALATE ☎ 521.8143	KOOLJACKS FAT 16	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
NOVALICHES ☎ 936.9757	EMMANUELLE VERSE 2 MEN OPPOSE	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM GARBEGA EVERY THURS OF DEC. BLAKDYAK EVERY FRI. OF DEC.
BIÑAN ☎ (049)511.7268	FEEDBACK/AFTER 8 MUSIC CIRCUIT	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S
JUPITER ☎ 890.4735	P R P	NO ENTRANCE FEE
REMEDIOS ☎ 522.0429	CROSSTOWN MUSIC ZONE	NO ENTRANCE FEE
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DECEMBER 17 WEDNESDAY 438-3942

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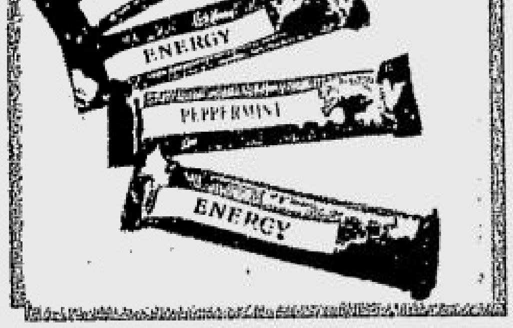
UNCOVERING CHOCOLATE'S DEEP, DARK SECRETS

Chocolate has got to be the world's favorite flavor! Ever since Christopher Columbus brought it back to Spain from Mexico in 1502, the winning taste of chocolate has captivated millions. Explorer Hernando Cortez praised "the divine drink..which builds up resistance". U.S. President Thomas Jefferson extolled its virtues, heaping praises on "the superiority of chocolate…for both health and nourishment".

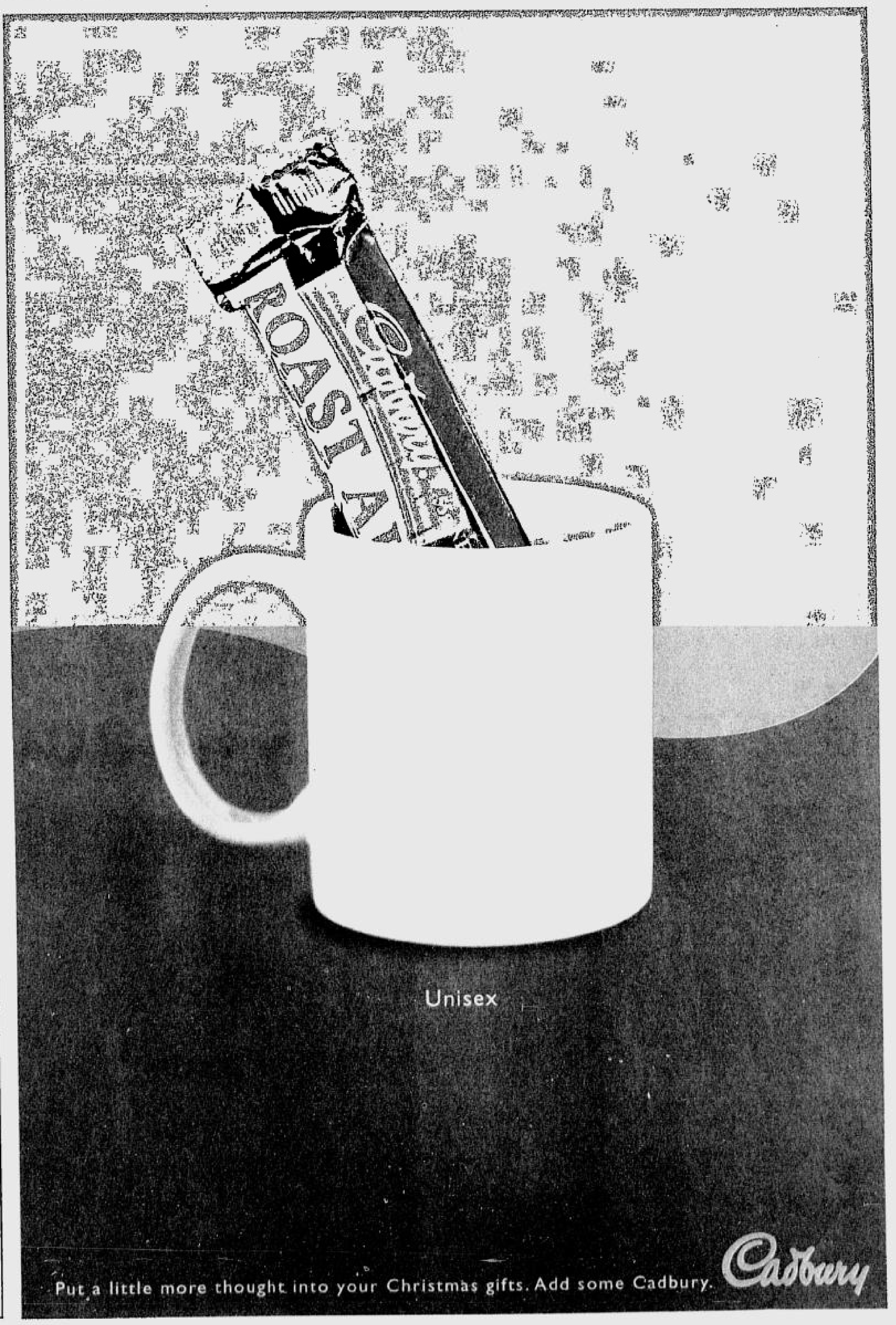
The value of chocolate as a handy food to boost energy and morale has long been recognized. It is said that soldiers during the Civil War even brought chocolate to the battlefields as a source of nourishment. Chocolate supposedly can keep the heart healthy as suggested in the studies done by the European Society of Cardiology. Polyphenols in cocoa may help to maintain cardiovascular health. Today, chocolate has become available in delicious varieties and colors-liquid, solid, shaped into bars and pastries, molded into ice cream, in white, brown and mocha (with the addition of milk).

To this day however, it is the purer dark chocolate version that is creating quite a stir with its healthier properties superior to milk chocolate. Dark chocolate was found to boost blood oxidant levels by nearly 20% which is needed to protect the heart from oxidative damage. Doctors have even started advising people to include in their balanced diet a small bar of chocolate a day!

Cadbury's Energy Bar is one such treat that is packed with health-giving benefits of dark chocolate. Deep…dark…delicious…and a do-gooder for the body! With all the energy-boosting nutrients to help you get through your day. And for a fresh, cool treat, there's Cadbury Peppermint with that great minty chocolate taste you'll go for anytime, anywhere. All these healthy dark chocolate treats, from the established name in chocolate, Cadbury!



ADVT


Cadbury ROAST ALMOND
Unisex
Put a little more thought into your Christmas gifts. Add some Cadbury.
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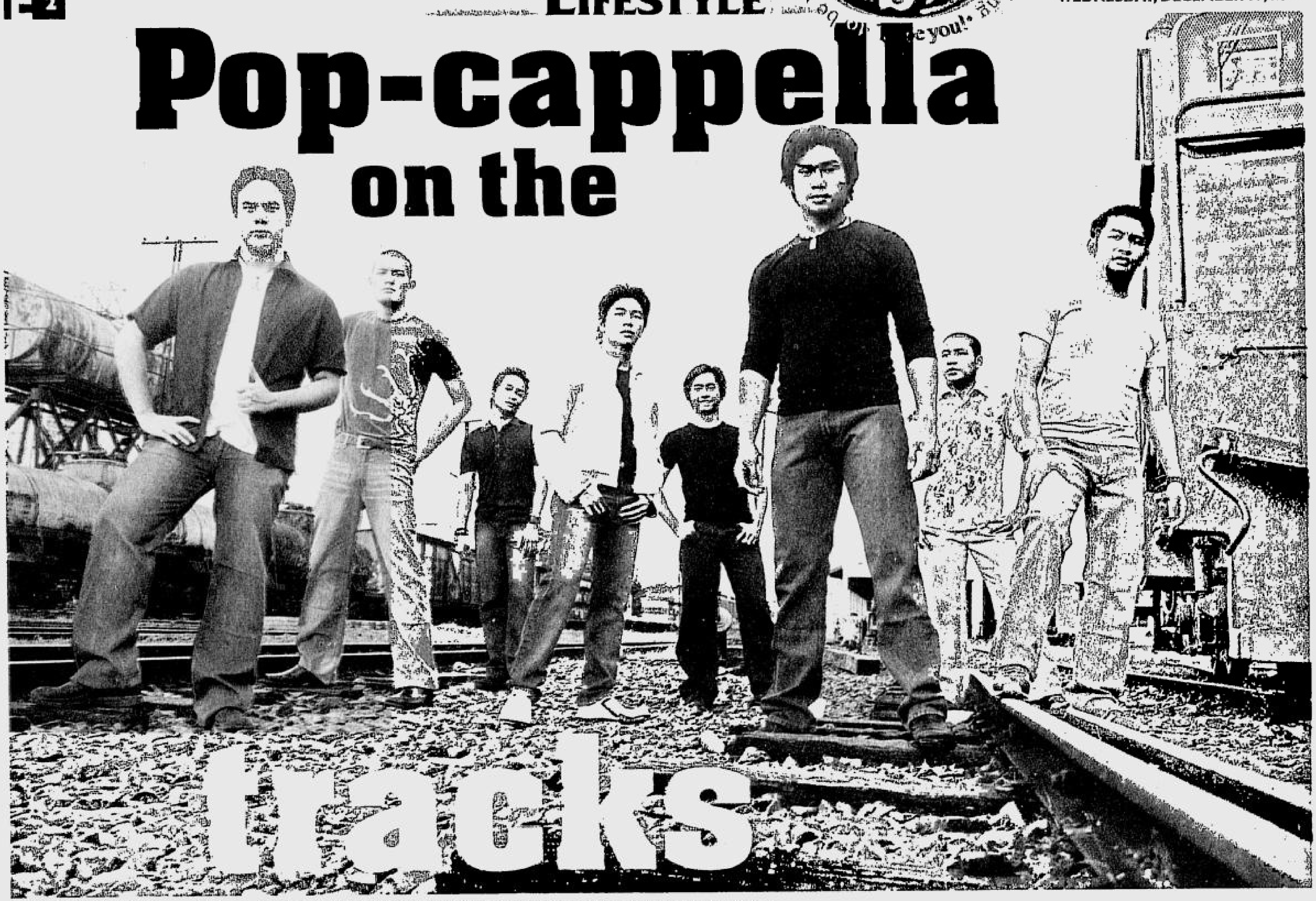
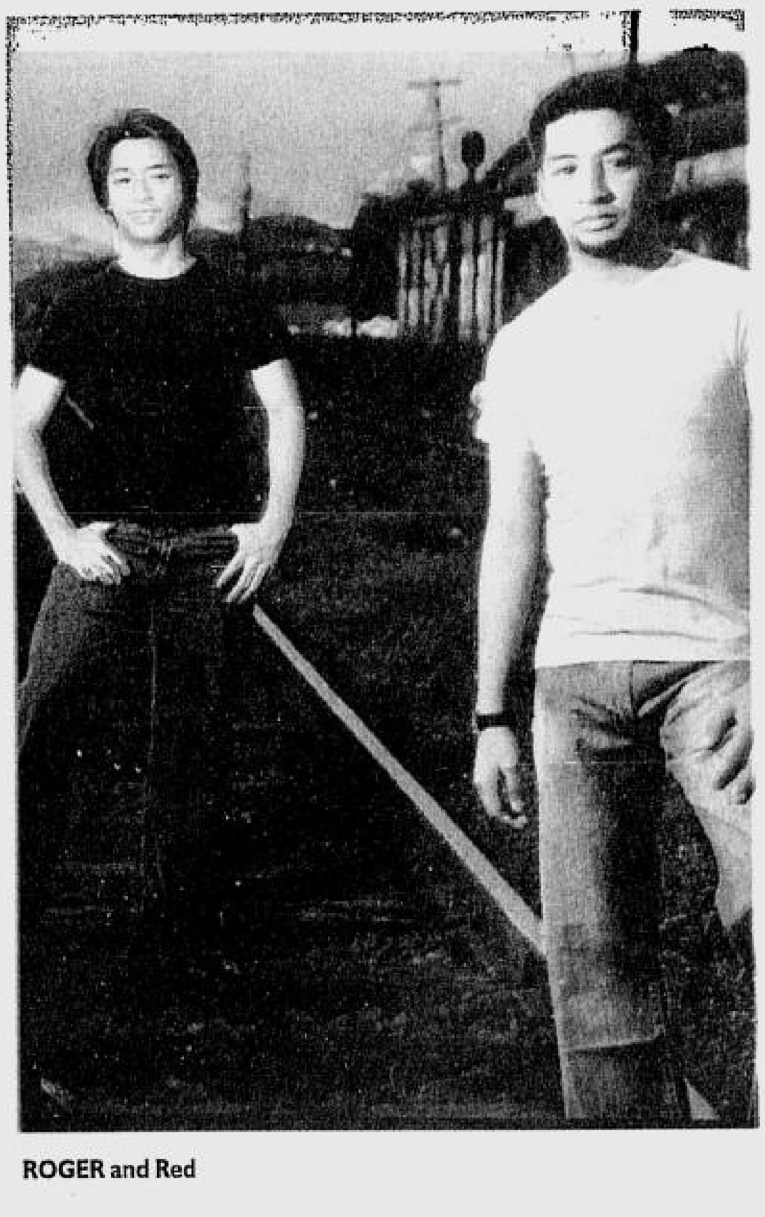
Pop-cappella on the tracks



ALMOST FAMOUS. "Our music is new. People aren't really ready [for it]," Ikey (second from left) says of the Akafellas' tunes.



ROGER and Red

From page E1

before retreating when someone cries, "Police!"

"Are you going to write about this?" Ikey asks me as we start running for our lives when a bunch of policemen show up with guns.

Oh well. I just did.

'We're a voice band'

The Akafellas started three years ago in choir. But they only officially got together as "The Akafellas" last October.

"We won first runner-up at the Magic 89.9 contest," Ikey shares. Their entries? "Tuloy Pa Rin" and a Craig David medley. Since then, they've done a few mall shows, including "corporate events and debuts!" quips Robi. Their gig sched might change soon though—their debut album is slated to be released on January 14.

Since it's being released under a major record label (Star Records), the boys confess they don't have much creative control. "Our kind of music is new; it's not really recognized yet," Ikey says. "People aren't ready." The boys, however, do some writing themselves.

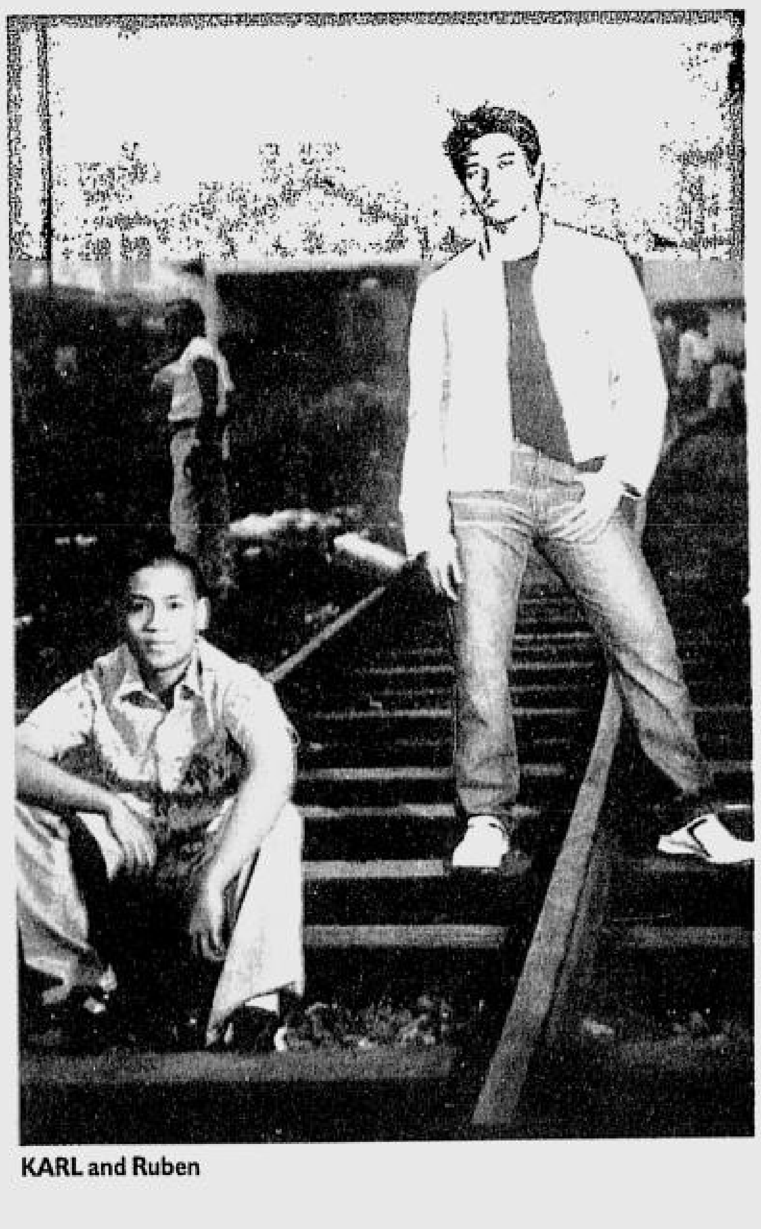
One thing they don't like is being called a "boyband." "We're a voice band!" Robi says. "I mean, as a boyband, there's not much to look at ... so we have to compensate with our *kalokohan*!"

It would be pretty easy to judge these guys as a dancing, lip-syncing group ("We tried dancing, it didn't work," laughs Ikey). They are, after all, eight eye-pleasing guys oozing with talent. Alas, the guys appear so anti-rockstar while we shoot at the station in the amidst of garbage and animal droppings.

"We get heckled a lot, and we're not exactly used to that," Ruben says. "We got booed in Baguio. I think it was because the other artists in the line-up were musicians, and Rivermaya played right after us,"

However, it won't be long before these guys start to get noticed. Of course, they'll have to go through the mandatory "cheesy" stage of guesting at variety shows, and maybe a couple more debuts and proms. But as the acoustic craze mellows out, the acappella craze just might be around the corner. Besides, these are the guys who serenaded Mandy Moore at her so-called autograph signing in the mall, and got the prepubescent girls in the crowd screaming and raving.

As Mike gets his turn in the shoot, passengers from the train start yelling out to him. "*Guwapo! Punta ka naman dito!*" they scream. The boys seem a bit uneasy with this kind of attention. Well, they better start getting used to it.



KARL and Ruben

Tayuman gets a facelift

By Hans Enverga
2bU! Contributor

TAYUMAN is the heart of the PNR system. It brings together the dilapidated tracks of the Main Line North (Manila-Caloocan-La Union) and the Main Line South (Manila-Alabang-Bicol), although the northbound route has been suspended.

The station is 111 years old. The Manila Railways Company Ltd. London started constructing the Manila-Dagupan Railway line in 1892. From the Manila Central Station in Tutuban, construction moved northward to Tayuman ending in Dagupan, Pangasinan. The Manila-Dagupan railway system was inaugurated Nov. 24, 1892.

(Andres Bonifacio's two brothers, Ciriaco and Procopio, both worked for the Manila Railway Company. Ciriaco was a train conductor.)

Tayuman Station is also the PNR's repair hub, giving antiquated coaches a new lease on life.

Ironically, the station itself is in a state of disrepair. The passenger shed is falling apart and the railroad tracks rusty. The station is a testament to many years of neglect of the PNR by the national government.

But things are about to change with financial help from Korea and China. PNR will finally undergo a P4.93 billion rehabilitation and modernization next year.

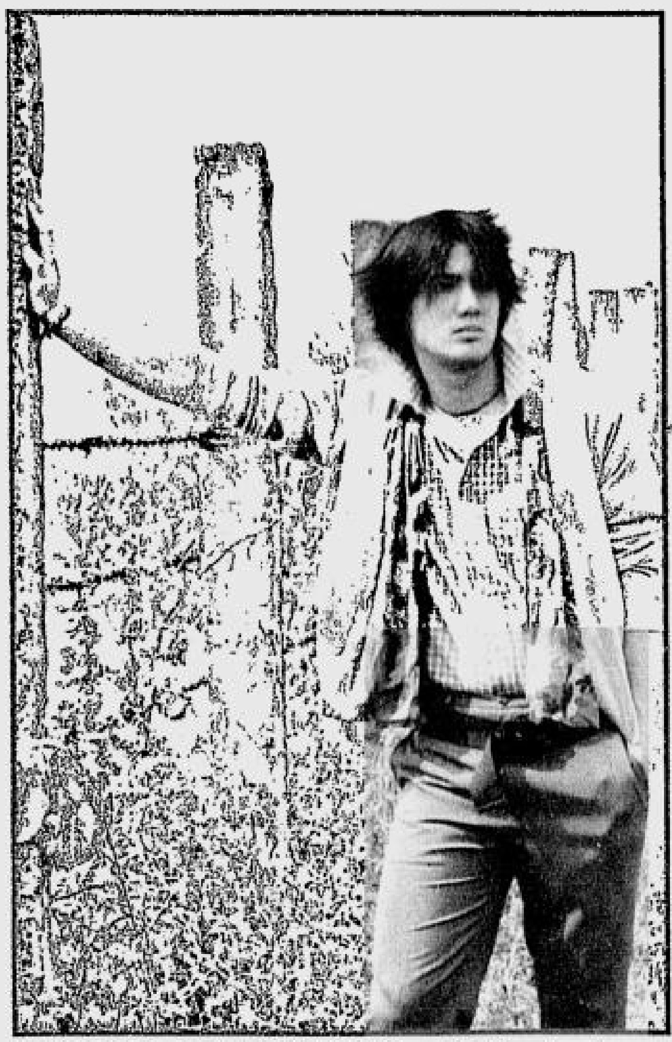
The dilapidated tracks will be completely replaced with new ones. In no time, Tayuman will be deploying brand-new diesel-electric powered coaches. PNR department manager for transportation Estelito Nierva said the new locomotives could travel up to 100 km per hour.

By 2005 or 2006, commuters can expect the following miracles: Caloocan-Tayuman-Alabang in 30 minutes (half the current one hour); Manila-Quezon Province in 1.5 hours (from four hours); and Manila-Bicol in five hours (from 12 hours).

E-mail hansenverga@yahoo.com.sg

PAULO, Ikey, and Robi

METEORIC run to the finish catches Brent in a vest and flat front pants (P669.75), Trishan in a sleeveless knitted top and gray jogging pants (P250), and Ton in a sleeveless, zip-up knitted top and sandblasted jeans.



LIME-GREEN checkered shirt (P795) and flat front pants.

You only need Anthony Nocom's clothes, and youth and attitude in spades, to pull off the look

ALL-WEATHER hooded top (P279.75), zip-up sweater and loose beige pants (P369.75)

Effortless F4 fashion

LONG-SLEEVED knit top (P829.75) and sandblasted jeans.

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Chito Vecina

WHEN Anthony Nocom first came out with fitted shirts made of stretch cotton a few seasons ago, the men's wear designer hadn't the slightest idea that he'd soon be riding a trend.

True enough, before the first half of the year was over, fitted and layered shirts paired with loose athletic pants became all the rage, thanks to a group of Taiwanese heartthrobs with long, tousled hair who called themselves F4.

"I've heard of them," says Nocom, whose ready-to-wear shirts, pants and suits that bear his name are sold at all SM department stores, "but I haven't had the chance to really sit down and watch their show."

Since he caters to the mass market, a bulk of Nocom's clothes is still decidedly conservative, consisting mostly of boxy shirts and pleated pants.

Lately, however, the designer has become more adventurous, introducing flat front pants, three-buttoned suits and slim, offbeat-colored shirts to a conservative clientele. Some of his shirts even have tucks at the back, elements unheard of at SM until recently.

"You'll never go wrong with a good white shirt," he says. "But it's nice to add a dash of color once in a while to your wardrobe. People will be seeing more of my shirts in various shades of blues and greens."

He also considers the availability of stretch, wrinkle-resistant cotton fabrics as heavensent. Not only are they versatile, he says, clothes made from such materials are light and ideal for traveling.

Nocom won't be offering anything too radical anytime soon. But with the right combination and styling, anyone with enough attitude and imagination can achieve the F4 look.

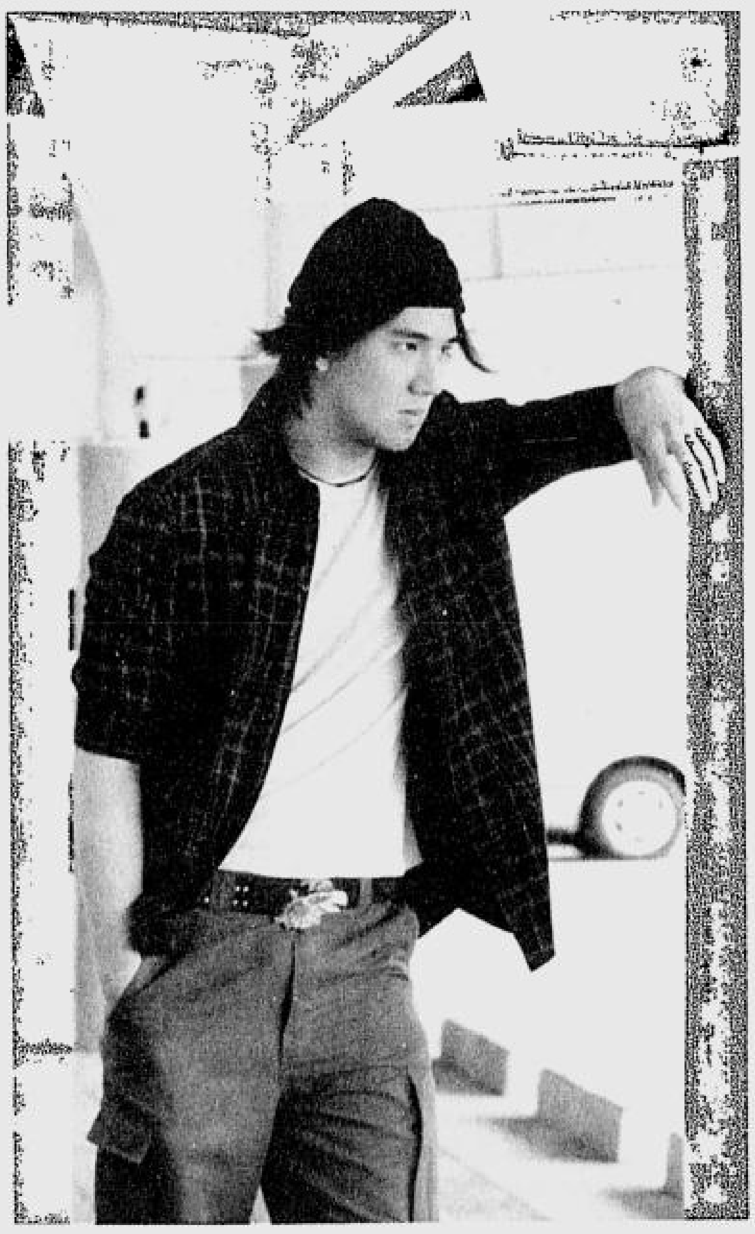
For this photo shoot, Nocom pairs some of his clothes with athletic pants, shades and faux bling blings available at SM. A number of athletic pants is lined with jersey; others come with drawstrings at the hem. He borrowed such accessories as bonnets, a scarf and a rainbow-colored belt from good friend Vic Barba.

"Tracksuits have staged a comeback with the return of Adidas," says Nocom. "This time, though, athletic wear is mixed with casual and even formal wear for a dressier look."

And the best part is, you don't have to be as handsome as Jerry Yan, a.k.a. Dao Ming Si, to pull off the look. You need only look young and toned to get away with it.

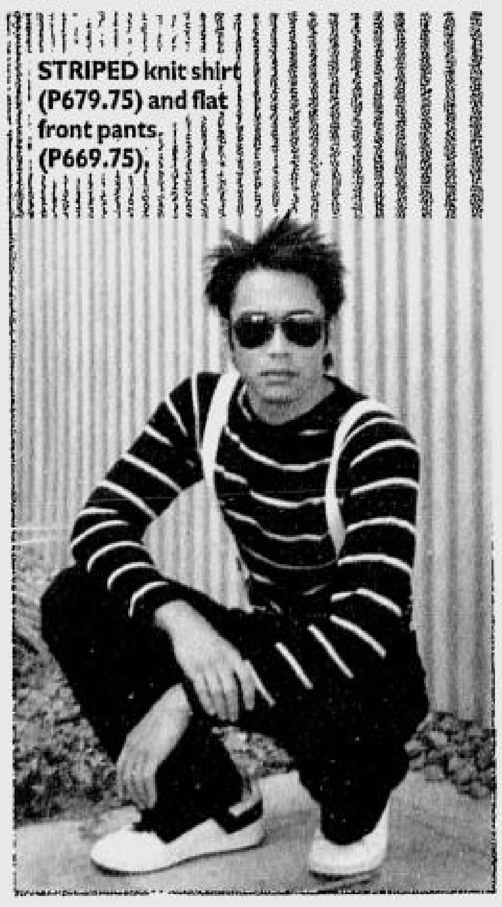
E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

CLOTHES:
ANTHONY NOCOM FOR SHOEMART, SM TEENS' DEPARTMENT
GROOMING:
LOWEL BUENAVENTURA OF LOWEL SALON
MODELS:
TON LAO PINAR, TRISHAN CUASO, CASTING COUP, AND BRENT JAVIER
VENUE:
SM OFFICES, PASAY CITY



CHECKERED shirt (P669.75) and gray cargo pants from SM's teens' wear department (P300).

ROUND-NECK knit shirt (P669.75) and flat front pants (P669.75).



STRIPED knit shirt (P679.75) and flat front pants. (P669.75).

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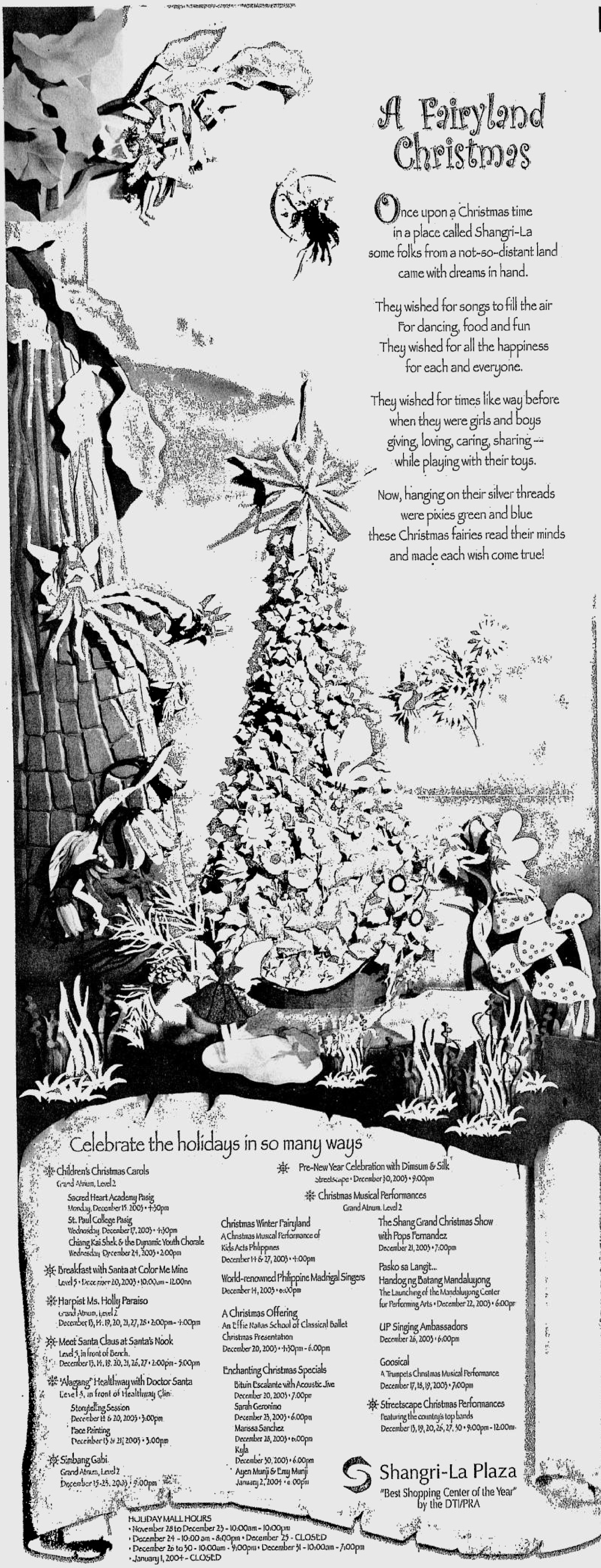
SM CITY MANILA • SM CITY BACOOR • SM CITY NORTH EDSA



A Fairyland Christmas

Once upon a Christmas time
in a place called Shangri-La
some folks from a not-so-distant land
came with dreams in hand.

They wished for songs to fill the air
For dancing, food and fun
They wished for all the happiness
for each and everyone.

They wished for times like way before
when they were girls and boys
giving, loving, caring, sharing —
while playing with their toys.

Now, hanging on their silver threads
were pixies green and blue
these Christmas fairies read their minds
and made each wish come true!

Celebrate the holidays in so many ways

- Children's Christmas Carols
  Grand Atrium, Level 2
  Sacred Heart Academy Pasig
  Monday, December 15, 2003 • 4:30pm
  St. Paul College Pasig
  Wednesday, December 17, 2003 • 4:30pm
  Chiang Kai Shek & the Dynamic Youth Chorale
  Wednesday, December 24, 2003 • 2:00pm
- Breakfast with Santa at Color Me Mine
  Level 5 • December 20, 2003 • 10:00am - 12:00nn
- Harpist Ms. Holly Paraiso
  Grand Atrium, Level 2
  December 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28 • 2:00pm - 4:00pm
- Meet Santa Claus at Santa's Nook
  Level 3, in front of Bench.
  December 13, 14, 18, 20, 21, 26, 27 • 2:00pm - 5:00pm
- "Alagang" Healthway with Doctor Santa
  Level 3, in front of Healthway Clinic
  Storytelling Session
  December 14 & 20, 2003 • 3:00pm
  Face Painting
  December 13 & 21, 2003 • 3:00pm
- Simbang Gabi
  Grand Atrium, Level 2
  December 15-23, 2003 • 9:00pm
- Pre-New Year Celebration with Dimsum & Silk
  Streetscape • December 30, 2003 • 9:00pm
- Christmas Musical Performances
  Grand Atrium, Level 2

Christmas Winter Fairyland
A Christmas Musical Performance of
Kids Acts Philippines
December 14 & 27, 2003 • 4:00pm

World-renowned Philippine Madrigal Singers
December 14, 2003 • 6:00pm

A Christmas Offering
An Effie Nañas School of Classical Ballet
Christmas Presentation
December 20, 2003 • 4:30pm - 6.00pm

Enchanting Christmas Specials
Bituin Escalante with Acoustic Jive
December 20, 2003 • 7:00pm
Sarah Geronimo
December 23, 2003 • 6.00pm
Marissa Sanchez
December 28, 2003 • 6:00pm
Kyla
December 30, 2003 • 6.00pm
Ayen Munji & Emy Munji
January 2, 2004 • 6:00pm

The Shang Grand Christmas Show
with Pops Fernandez
December 21, 2003 • 7:00pm

Pasko sa Langit...
Handog ng Batang Mandaluyong
The Launching of the Mandaluyong Center
for Performing Arts • December 22, 2003 • 6:00pm

UP Singing Ambassadors
December 26, 2003 • 6:00pm

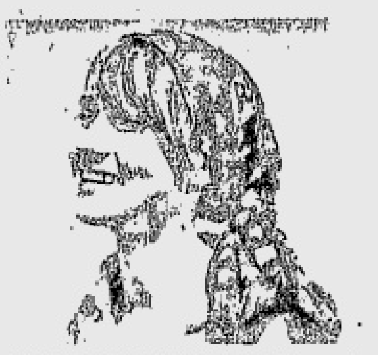
Goosical
A Trumpets Christmas Musical Performance
December 17, 18, 19, 2003 • 7:00pm

- Streetscape Christmas Performances
  Featuring the country's top bands
  December 13, 19, 20, 26, 27, 30 • 9:00pm - 12:00mn

Shangri-La Plaza
"Best Shopping Center of the Year"
by the DTI/PRA

HOLIDAY MALL HOURS
• November 28 to December 23 - 10:00am - 10:00pm
• December 24 - 10:00 am - 8:00pm • December 25 - CLOSED
• December 26 to 30 - 10:00am - 9:00pm • December 31 - 10:00am - 7:00pm
• January 1, 2004 - CLOSED

Cool teen finds



BRATPACK, the teen-oriented lifestyle store, introduces the Buff and the Sigg.

Buff is a multifunctional seamless wear. Think of the hit TV show "Survivor" and the bandana-like garment worn by the contestants, and you get the picture of the Buff.

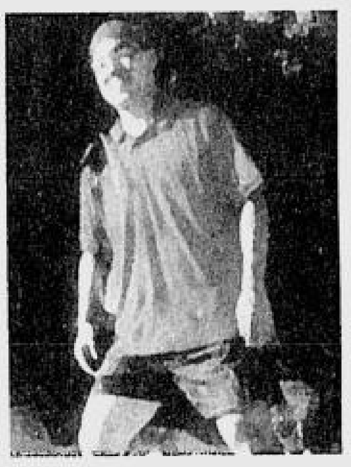
It is a seamless tubular garment made with a special microfiber fabric that maintains warmth and releases humidity. A versatile article of clothing, the Buff can be worn as a scarf, cap, bandana, headband. Caviro, S.L. started to sell the multifunctional seamless headwear Buffs in Spain in 1992. Today, Buff products are available in more than 22 countries around the world.

Sigg started with a simple Swiss hiker's bottle. Today, the bottle has acquired cult status. Started in Biel in 1908, the Sigg's core business is drinking bottles.

Sigg bottles are innovative, functional and suited for leisure and sporting activities. Made from a one-piece aluminum block, which results in uniform, seamless walls, the Sigg aluminum bottle is the brand leader in comprehensive, high-quality drinking systems for leisure and sports.

A new lifestyle collection featuring bags and aluminum bottles with stylish designs are available at Bratpack.

Bratpack boutiques are located at SM City North Edsa, SM Manila, Southmall, SM City Pampanga, SM City Davao, SM Cagayan, Robinsons Place Ermita, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Bacolod and Robinsons Iloilo.



THE 2BU! YEARENDER SURVEY

Vote for the best and worst of 2003

AMONG last year's big winners were Mandy Moore, Harry Potter, Incubus, Chicosci, Norah Jones, John Mayer, Magic 89.9, Greenbelt 3 Cinemas, Jon Hall, Sarah Meier, Bench Fix, McDonald's, KFC Hotshots, BJ Manalo, "Amazing Race" and "CSI."

Who will be the big winners of 2003?

We want you to be the judge again. Tell us who you think deserve to be hailed the Best and Worst of 2003 under the following categories:

Music: band, song, singer, radio station, radio DJ, music video, album packaging, concert

Film: movie, movie theater, actor, actress

Fashion: male model, female model, fashion designer, brand, shop, trend, accessory, fashion icon

Health and beauty: beauty product, spa, salon, hairstyle, fitness regimen

Literature: book, writer, magazine

Food: restaurant, dish, fast food

Sports: athlete, UAAP team, NCAA team

Television: commercial, TV show, TV actress, TV actor, VJ, music channel

Technology: website, gadget, game

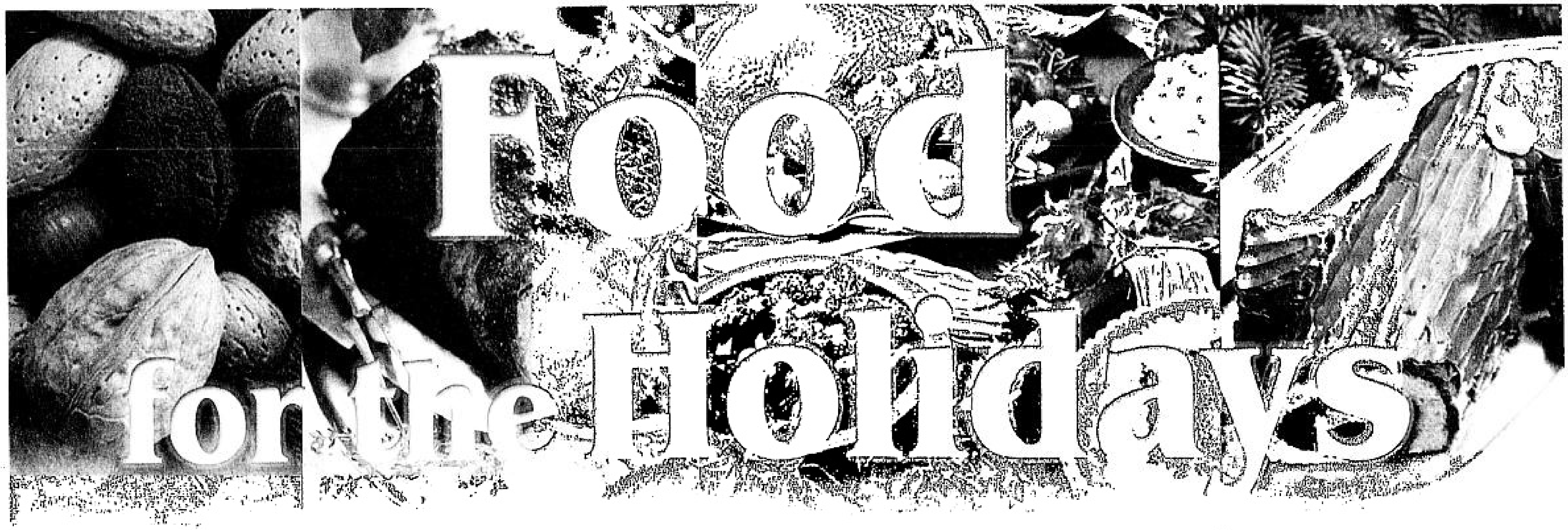
Send your answers to 2bU! Best and Worst of 2003 Poll, PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, Chino Roces Ave. corner Yague St., Makati; or e-mail contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph.

Have your answers in by 12 nn on Dec. 27.

John Mayer CDs!

WE'RE crazy about John Mayer (well actually, only Tim Yap is, and he pronounces his name as John "Mah-yer"), and we're pretty sure you are too. And since we're feeling like Santa this Christmas, we're giving away five Wrangler shirts and five copies of "Heavier Things." Just answer this question: "How do you really pronounce John Mayer's last name?" Address your e-mails to contest_2bu@inquirer.com.ph, just so we can all prove Tim wrong. Make sure your entries are in by Monday, Dec.22, 12 nn.

Food for the Holidays



10 things you should never do at Noche Buena

By Normandy dela Paz

GRUB, booze, food, beer, chow, hooch! Never in the history of the Filipino has he eaten so much food and guzzled down so much alcohol until his gut bursts open than when it's during the Noche Buena feast of Christmas. Well, except when it's the fiesta season, give or take a couple of birthdays, and oh the baptismal of his godson/goddaughter, add to that the occasional "overtime work" during payday, and when his uncle, Tito Boy comes home from Saudi and (leaves as well) - offering lots and lots of "pulutan" to go with his newly bought (pronounced when drunk) "Dyeyenbi" or "Dyaniwoker". Come to think of it, the Filipino just loves to eat and drink anytime all the time. But since Christmas, as they say, is just around the proverbial corner, lets focus on the Filipino's "appetite for destruction" when it comes to Noche Buena. Appetite for destruction here means his self-destruction. All that grub and booze paired with the Filipino's uncanny hatred for moderation, and you've got a lot of accidents waiting to happen. So to be on the safe side, you might want to read this never-do list so that your family can still enjoy your company next Christmas' Noche Buena:

1. Never eat the suckling pig --- while it's still suckling on its mother.

2. Never eat the Christmas ham --- if it says "Expires 1983" or "Reserved for Gen. McArthur".

3. Never light a firecracker with your cigarette when you're already drunk, you might throw your cigarette away and start puffing on the firecracker.

4. Never eat with a fork --- while your boss' lovely wife is holding it and he's beside you holding a steak knife.

5. Never write a Christmas letter on an empty stomach, use paper instead.

6. Never get drunk and then make fun of someone who is twice your size, especially if it's your mother-in-law.

7. Never eat spaghetti with hands, you're not a cannibal.

8. Never say to your wife, while she's holding a butcher knife, that her cooking this Christmas is much better than last year.

9. Never drink beer from the fridge --- of your neighbor.

10. Never play with your kids "watusi" (again when drunk), you might mistake a piece that is sticking on your finger as "tinga" or toothpick, which you usually put in your mouth.

Okay, this list is not helpful at all. But what's important here is to know your limit when it comes to eating and drinking, and applying it for real when the temptation is at its highest, so that you can enjoy Christmas full of cheers and not a Christmas full of tears. Here's to happy eating and drinking--in moderation!

How to keep food fresher in your fridge

MANY of us are guilty. Remember the last time you dug around your fridge looking for the mustard? What else did you find? 3-day old spaghetti maybe? Or was it lettuce with wilting leaves? Or three lonely hotdogs leftover from the last bag you bought?

But with a little extra planning, you can make your fridge more organized. As soon as you come from the supermarket or wet market, divide your meats into meal portions and freeze them in plastic containers, so you don't have to thaw everything when you only need some. Do the same with your leftover food. Make sure your containers are clear so you know what's inside each one.

Zip-lock bags are also a good alternative, and they're easy to fit inside the corners of your freezer. However, these can be quite expensive in the long run, so make sure you wash and re-use them.

An even better option is to buy products that actually come in resealable packaging, like the new Zip 'n' Zeal bag that Purefoods Bacon comes in. It's the first one of its kind in refrigerated meats, but when you realize how convenient it is, you'll wonder why no one thought of it before. According to the marketing guys at Purefoods-Hormel, their company is really about food safety. That's why their hotdogs have Best-Before seals, and now, their bacon comes in resealable packs.

Your Purefoods bacon comes completely sealed and you just cut along the edge of the pack. There's a Zip-lock seal there that you can open and reseal every time you cook a few pieces of bacon. This way, you can ensure that your bacon stays as fresh and delicious as the day your bought it, even if it gets buried behind the rest of the stuff in the freezer. Learn these little tricks, and your fridge and freezer will soon become a model of freshness and neatness. Happy homemaking!

> As soon as you come from the supermarket or wet market, divide your meats into meal portions and freeze them in plastic containers, so you don't have to thaw everything when you only need some.

SARAP TALAGA, BASTA STAR NG NOCHE BUENA!
PUREFOODS
CHRISTMAS HAMS
Fiesta Cooked Ham
PUREFOODS HORMEL
A joint venture of San Miguel Purefoods Co. Inc and Hormel Foods International Corp.
San Miguel Pure Foods
A Company of San Miguel Corporation
Fiesta
www.fiestaham.com

Ang lasang kinalakihan nating lahat - juicy, meaty at sugar glazed. Di kumpleto ang Pasko pag wala ang star ng Noche Buena!

Dencio's at the Megastrip

THE NEW Dencio's restaurant at the Megastrip of SM Megamall is not just a place for people who love good food. More importantly, it's a place where families can gather and enjoy home-cooked favorites in an ambience that spells "home away from home".

This is seen in its warm colors, inviting and relaxing interiors and friendly staff, led by owners Eric Rabat and his wife Maryrose Razon-Rabat, and their partners Gary Baltao and Richard and Carissa Manuel. Even the man who started the Dencio's chain, Dennis Nakpil, is a first cousin to Eric. It was Eric who approached his cousin and suggested the idea of branching out to malls. "Fortunately, he was very open to the idea," Eric says.

In October last year, they opened their first branch at Robinsons Place in Ermita. And just this November, they opened at the Megastrip of SM Megamall, a location that brings them even closer to families. Being located in the country's biggest and busiest mall, it's not surprising to see families (and groups of friends) walk in carrying shopping bags, leading children by the hand or talking about the latest movie they watched in the mall's theaters.

According to Eric and Maryrose, families come for the ambience as much as they do for the food, which includes Dencio's favorites like Sisig, Crispy Pata, Kare-Kare and the Sari-Saring Sinugba, which is enough to feed a family of four. Younger kids and teens enjoy the Buffalo Chicken and Buffalo Squid Fritters, which are deep-fried and come with a sweetish barbecue sauce and cream dip. Eric himself developed these dishes in the restaurant's kitchen. "The kids love it," quips Eric, who has two children of his own.

Soon, there will even be merienda products for families to enjoy. These will be traditional Pinoy merienda favorites like Pancit Palabok and Dinuguan at Puto.

"That's one of the things that made us decide to get a Dencio's franchise," says Eric. "They do a lot of innovation, and they always encourage us to come up with new products." Dencio's even has a commissary in Mandaluyong, with a food technician whose job is to ensure the quality of the food, especially of the new additions to the menu.

Being parents themselves, Eric and Maryrose naturally welcome the fact that Dencio's has evolved from being a place where people come to drink to a truly family restaurant in every sense of the word. Although they opened barely three weeks ago, running the place is almost second nature to them. Besides, they really enjoy good food. "We've always been in the food and hotel and restaurant business," explains Eric.

Doesn't he plan to follow his family's footsteps into politics? Politics can wait, argues Eric, who is a scion of the Rabat clan, which is into agriculture and politics in Mati, Davao Oriental. "It's not really my line. Right now, my priority is the security of my family, which is why I'm in the food business. If I really wanted to go into politics, I could have been there by now. But politics requires a lot of sacrifice. Besides, I really love food. Halata naman sa katawan, di ba?" he laughs.

Take your family to the new Dencio's at The Megastrip of SM Megamall. It opens from 10:30 a.m. onwards. For reservations, call 637-4409.

Text, win and cook 'adobo'

ADOBO Atbp.
Cookbook

MASTER the techniques of unlocking the flavor of your favorite *adobo* recipe and then some as Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce and Monterey present the ultimate "Adobo Atbp." cookbook. It features several adobo recipes of the country's fave dish from classic pork *liempo* to baby prawns plus other delicious delights from Monterey, all are quick, simple and easy to prepare yet satisfying sumptuous. The "Adobo Atbp." cookbook shows how you can discover the difference with just a tablespoon of Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce.

Now you can get the chance to win your very own copy of this must-have cookbook. Winning is as easy as texting the 6-digit code number on the bottom of any bottle of Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce, and the 5-digit code number on the lower right hand corner of the coupon you receive when you buy at least P250 worth of Monterey meats.

All you have to do is follow this format: Text Adobo <space> Lea & Perrins code no. <space> MONTEREY coupon no., <space> name <space> Address <space> zip code to 0916-7581860. If your numbers match the list, you will get a reply. Hurry! Start texting your entries now as only limited texts will receive the cookbook through mail. This promo ends Dec. 31 or while supplies last.

Grab this unique chance to get a copy of the "Adobo Atbp," cookbook and discover the secrets of these savory *adobo* recipes, guaranteed to satisfy even the most discriminating tastes.

ITALIANNI'S RESTAURANT OFFERS CHRISTMAS BASKETS

Italianni's Restaurant has varied baskets that make for perfect presents for family and friends this Holiday season. There's the Bread and Wine Basket filled with the restaurant's homemade Tuscan and Focaccia bread, balsamic vinegar and a bottle of wine. This is available for P1,200 and P1,600. Italianni's popular New York-style Cheesecake comes in delightful tartlets topped with different mouth-watering flavors like blueberry, strawberry, peach, assorted fruit and kiwi. The Assorted Cheesecake Tartlet Box is available for P750 per five tartlets. The Assorted Muffin Box, meanwhile, has a dozen muffins in assorted flavors (blueberry, banana walnut, double chocolate, peach walnut, and strawberry) for P450 only. Italianni's also offers gift certificates in denominations of P250, P500, and P1,000. Italianni's Restaurant has branches at Greenbelt 2, Glorietta IV, Alabang Town Center and SM City Bicutan.

Fast-moving Home Meal Replacement feasts

ONE OF the fastest moving items on shopping lists this season is the country's first Home Meal Replacement product (HMR) most aptly called Moving Feasts. Moving Feasts are a set of delicious Filipino-Spanish ready-to-serve meals that have quickly gained attention from office workers, students and other consumers in and outside their homes. Commercial establishments patronize the meals for business activities like seminars, meetings, conferences, outings, product launchings and civic and social events. Moving Feasts have even attracted religious groups who make use of them for their retreats and other gatherings.

Moving Feasts promise to become a regular, essential home meal replacement for a growing number of Filipino families who no longer have the time, luxury, inclination or skill to prepare home-cooked meals. These meals have the potential to be in great demand among families, as these products are vastly more economical than cooking equivalents at home. Delicious and filling, they also offer the simplicity, speed and ease of preparation that make for comfortable dining.

Moving Feasts cuisine is a dynamic fusion of Spanish food prepared the Filipino way. Think Grandma's Adobo, Caldereta, Costillas, Pescado, Arroz a la Cubana and, of course, the classic Paella. Each meal is packed in a sealed, transparent food-grade tray that is recyclable and reusable, giving added value-for-money. And they are now available in 3Pac Combo packages, which are now selling at a lower price until Dec. 31.

Home Meals Kitchens Corp, manufacturer of Moving Feasts, has an expansive marketing network that now includes, among others, Rustan's Supermarkets in Makati, Rockwell and Ortigas Center, SM Hypermarts in Bicutan, Sucat and Marilao, La Boutique Convenience Stores in all Total Gasoline Service Stations, a number of Treats Convenience Stores in Petron Service Stations and several independent outlets throughout Metro Manila.

The meals, or Feasts, will soon be also available in other SM super malls and in Bing-Go Convenience Stores.

GREAT TERIYAKI BEGINS WITH GREAT SOY SAUCE

Teriyaki was first prepared in Japan centuries ago, as a marinade and basting sauce for grilled or broiled fish. The lustrous sheen the sauce produced as it cooked inspired the name teri (glaze) and yaki (broil). Whether used in today's kitchens as marinade, as added flavor while cooking, or as basting sauce for that finishing touch, Kikkoman Teriyaki Marinade and Sauce gives a unique flavor to grilled, broiled, or roasted chicken, fish, shrimp, meat and vegetables. In 1961, Kikkoman, the world's leading soy sauce manufacturer and oldest soy sauce brand, created the original bottled Teriyaki sauces. The product has since set the standard for Teriyaki flavor worldwide. The secret of the sweet savory flavor of Kikkoman's Teriyaki Marinade and Sauce - is that it's made from Kikkoman soy sauce, which is brewed using only natural ingredients. This enhances, not masks, the real flavor of food, giving life to everyday dishes.

Christmas time is ham time

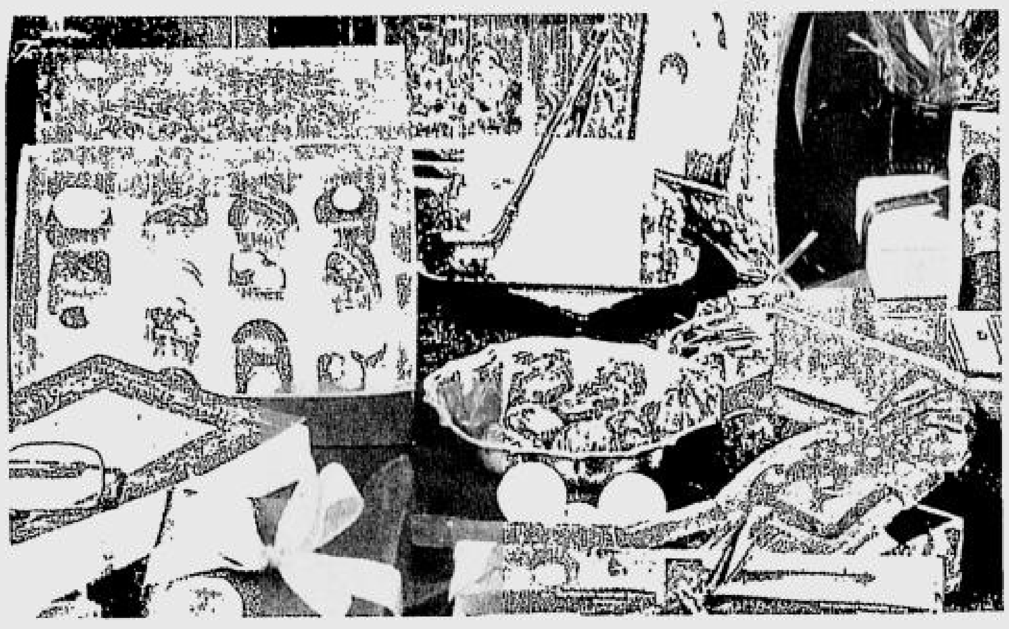
ASK a Pinoy to name his top 3 favorite Christmas foods, and chances are, ham will always be on the list. Like bibingka and tsokolate, Christmas ham never fails to bring a festive air to a family gathering. And no other Christmas ham does this better than Purefoods Fiesta Ham, the star of the Noche Buena. Sugar-glazed to a rich golden-brown, this juicy ham calls to mind fond memories of Christmases past. Admit it... if you closed your eyes right now and concentrated, you can almost taste Fiesta Ham on pandesal or ensaymada, right?

This year, Purefoods make its trademark Fiesta Ham even more special. Everybody's favorite ham now comes in a special new box, with a new label, and a built-in gift tag. It's the 'star' of Purefoods complete Christmas Ham line, with different types to suit different tastes.

For those who like strong flavors, there's the sweet-salty and spicy Chinese Ham, cured to perfection Hoc-Shui style. Many also enjoy the unusually-shaped Noche Buena Brick Ham, the delicately smoked Tenderized Cooked Ham or the juicy, classic Jamon de Bola.

People who want something different choose Chicken Cooked Ham, a delightfully smoky way to enjoy chicken. If you'd like something more affordable but just as festive, Pear-Shaped Ham comes in smaller sizes.

The air is getting cooler and the nights are getting longer. The carols are playing, and no matter what happens, the Filipino's love for Christmas will shine bright. So for your family and friends, light up the celebration this season with a well-loved Purefoods Christmas Ham.



LAST MINUTE HOLIDAY SHOPPING AT THE 5TH ANGEL SENT BAZAAR

The 5th Angel Sent Bazaar scheduled on Dec. 20 to 21 at the lower lobby of Edsa Shangri-La Hotel gives last minute holiday shoppers the best option to avoid the crowds and long queue. The bazaar features the best of local and select imported items ranging from one-of-a-kind gift items from the craft manufacturers of Asia, select delicatessen from Europe, wines and spirits from the world's best vineyards, American designed and made ready to wear collections, and the world's best candle designs and scents. If you want to be sure of what's in store for you in the next year, a celebrity seer and international psychic is on-hand for consultation and lots of accessories and charms to attract luck in the next year awaits shoppers. The bazaar is open to the public and starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 9 p.m. For more details call 825-0804 or 825-3482. Photo shows Belgian Chocolate from Theo Broma available at the bazaar.

sun glo
ORANGE JUICE

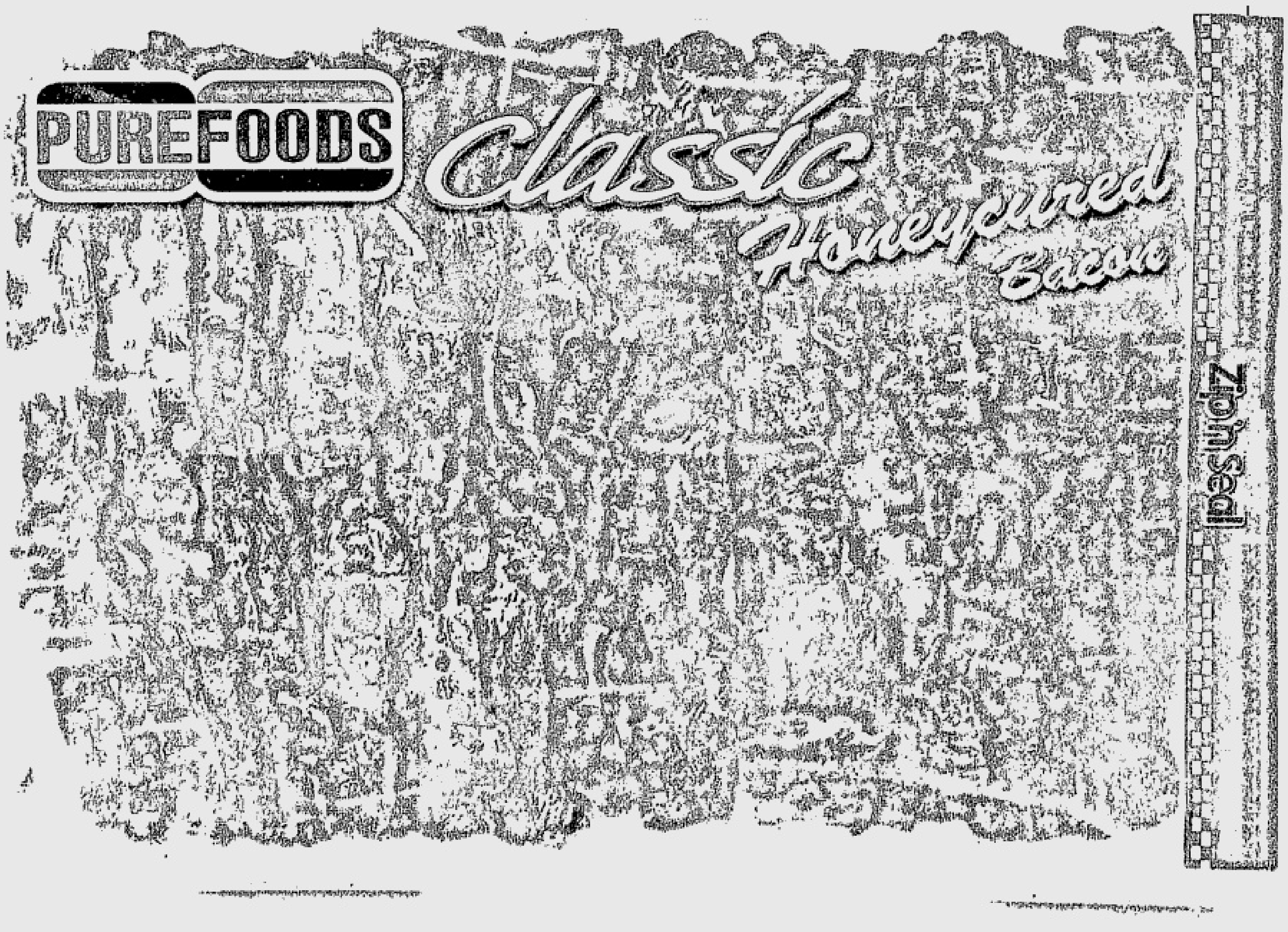
HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATED WITH X-MAS ORNAMENTS FROM SUNGLO

Is your Christmas tree lacking in the holiday spirit? Then liven it up with vibrant X'mas ornaments from Sunglo Juice Drinks. A favorite juice drink for many kids and adults alike, Sunglo makes every Christmas merrier with its refreshing fruit flavors, and now adds to that with colorful designs of Santa Claus, angels, gifts and much more that you can hang in your Christmas tree. The limited edition Sunglo X'mas Ornaments are available at the back portion of selected Christmas boxes (10 juice packs per box). Collect all nine designs.

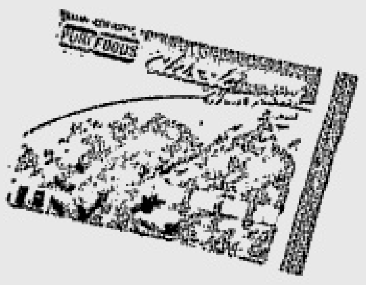
KIKKOMAN
Teriyaki
Marinade & Sauce
NET 1 LITER
The Original
Teriyaki
KIKKOMAN

e-mail us at sysumktg@sysuinc.com.ph for recipes or get a copy of CREATIVE COOKING WITH KIKKOMAN at all National Bookstores and Powerbooks.

UNLOCK A FRESHER, TASTIER BACON



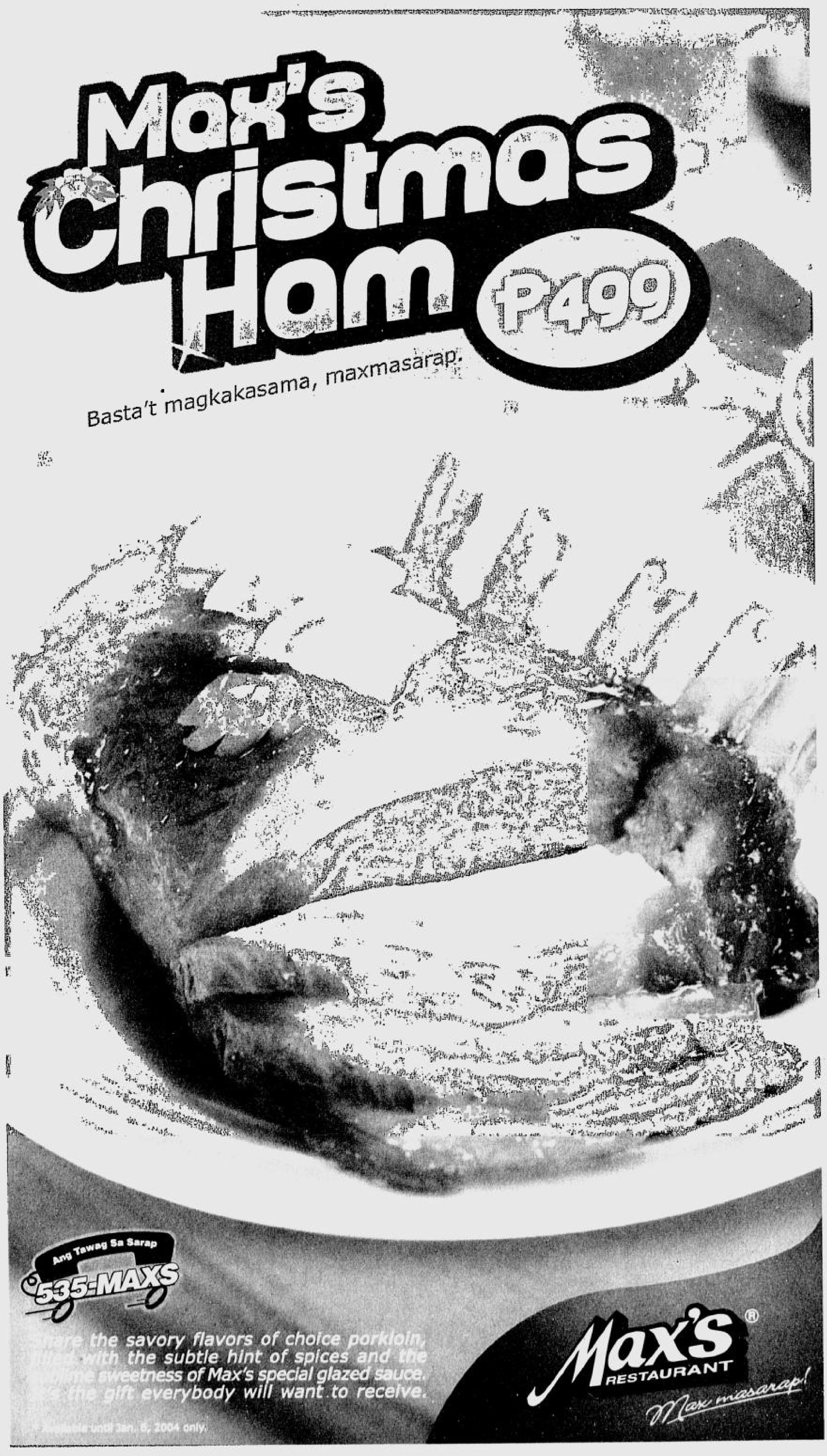
ONLY PUREFOODS HONEYCURED BACON COMES IN THE RESEALABLE ZIP 'N' SEAL PACK.
1. Cut along the dotted line the first time you use it. 2. Reseal your Zip 'n' Seal bag to keep your bacon fresh and delicious.



CELEBRATE the spirit of togetherness with family and friends with this special Yuletide offering from Max's—the Max's Holiday Feast. Enjoy this scrumptious meal of one regular Max's Fried Chicken, 8 slices Max's Holiday Ham, 4 cones of macaroni salad, 4 cups of rice and 4 glasses of softdrinks for only P599.

Free Lechon de Leche and photo coverage this Christmas

LOOKING for a place to spend your Christmas party? Look no further than Mario's Restaurant, the granddaddy of Philippine fine dining, where Christmas can be celebrated like never before. Here are four good reasons why you should choose Mario's as your party place this season. With every party you book comes a crispy, succulent roasted pig. Savor the traditional favorite—lechon de leche—alongside enticing cakes, desserts, appetizers and a round of drinks for a memorable feast. Mario's specialty is Filipino-Spanish cuisine. Satisfy your taste buds with flavorful dishes like Bistek Filipino y Calamares, Caldereta y Bangus Belly and the Fish Fillet with Mango Salsa. As you enjoy the holiday celebration, Mario's gives an added treat by capturing those special moments with family, friends or colleagues on film—for free. Did you spill juice on someone else's shirt? Laugh at your acrobatic moves and value every minute spent. The photo coverage comes with your party booking. Avoid all the stress looking for the best party deals. With Mario's, you are a winner twice over. Valued party bookers get free hotel gift certificates with breakfast buffet for two plus spa gift certificates. Most importantly, regardless of the size of booking, your party booker gets to avail of a gift certificate equivalent to 10 percent of the size of their booking. Visit Mario's Restaurant, you will have the best Christmas treat of your life. There are limited function rooms available for December. For reservations and inquiries, kindly call Miguel Castro at 723-9893 or 0920-9207521.



Max's Christmas Ham P499

Basta't magkakasama, maxmasarap.

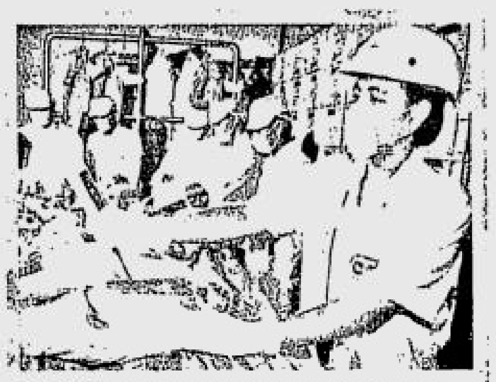
Ang Tawag Sa Sarap 535-MAXS

Share the savory flavors of choice porkloin, filled with the subtle hint of spices and the sublime sweetness of Max's special glazed sauce. It's the gift everybody will want to receive.

Available until Jan. 6, 2004 only.

Max's® RESTAURANT

Max masarap!



BUILDING UP HOLIDAY HAM INVENTORY
Workers at CDO-Foodsphere Inc, a key player in the processed meat industry, build up inventory of CDO Holiday Ham last week at the company's technoplant in Valenzuela City in anticipation of a big demand for the traditional Christmas staple. Industry analysts have projected that the specialty ham business will be spared by the lingering economic crisis since Filipinos love to celebrate Christmas with merry-making and feasting.

Preventing weight gain this Christmas

THERE'S no definite figure yet on how many pounds we Filipinos add to our weight during the Christmas season, but we can be sure that in general, most of us will add at least three pounds during the following weeks of holiday food and booze fests.

From the first invite of your relatives' media noche feast right through to the last drop of beer or wine at New Year's, healthy, sensible eating habits are forgotten. This excess weight puts an extra strain on the heart and joints. For seniors this weight gain is especially serious if they have an existing heart problem or high blood pressure. Every extra pound of weight forces the heart to work that much harder. If the heart has to pump harder the blood pressure will go up. For seniors with diabetes weight gain makes it much harder to maintain blood sugars in the normal range.

How can you prevent weight gain, and still enjoy the social and family gatherings of the Holiday season? It's not as hard as you think, according to most dieticians. With some planning you can make this a healthy and happy holiday season.

- Eat a substantial breakfast that includes protein. Protein takes longer to digest and helps you to feel full for much longer.
- If you are attending a potluck function, make your contribution a healthy one. A simple mixed fruit or spinach salad is easy to make and carry.
- If you are attending a sit down dinner, let your host or hostess know in advance of any food restrictions you may have. If a friend or family member knows you are on a special diet beforehand it will make dinner a more pleasant experience.
- Don't try to start a weight loss diet now. Save the diet for your new year's resolution. If you cheat you may feel guilty and end up eating more.
- Include some time for exercise. Don't just go to the mall to shop, go for some exercise also. Malls are wonderful places to walk, out of the elements and climate controlled. If time is limited try to park as far from your stop as you can.

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